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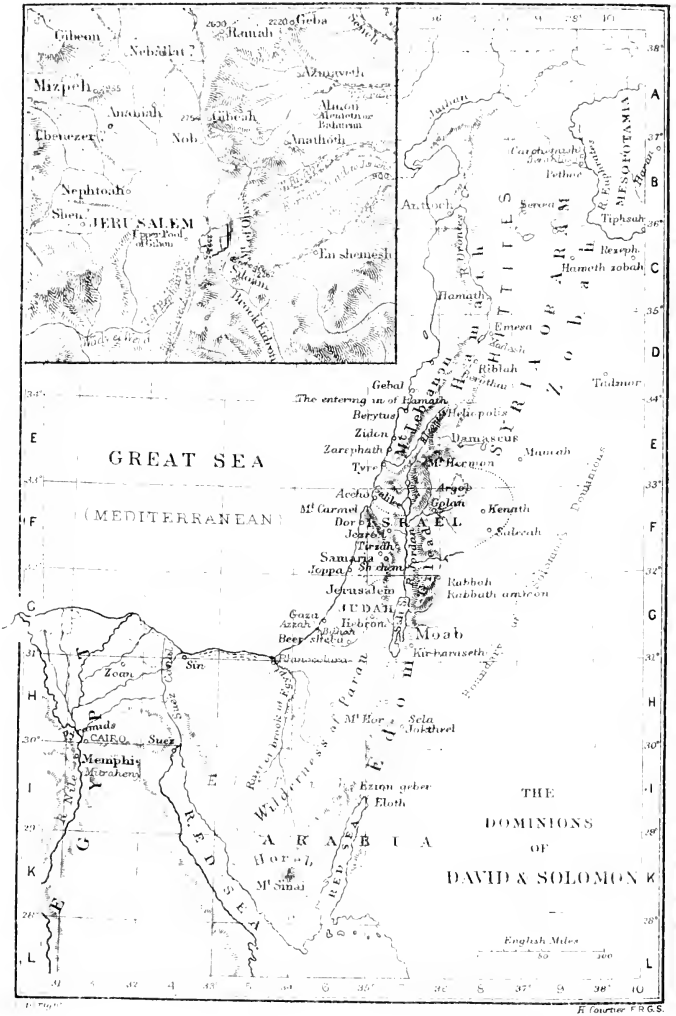

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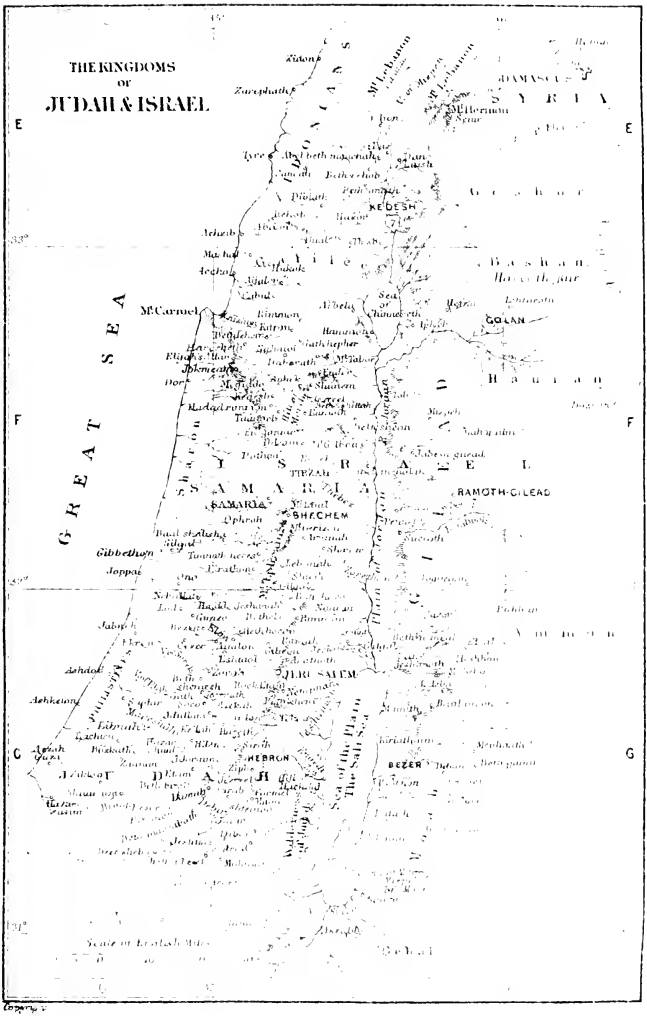
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THE SECOND BOOK

OF THE

KINGS

WITH MAP INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THE

REV. J. RAWSON LUMBY, D.D.

NORRISIAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,

FELLOW OF ST CATHARINE'S COLLEGE.

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For fuller information on all matters of Introduction, as well as for more copious explanation and illustration of the Text, the reader is referred to the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

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MAP TO FACE TITLE.

*** The Text adopted in this edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed.

ABBREVIATIONS.

A.V.	The 'Authorised' Version of 1611.
R.V.	The Revised Version of 1885.
Heb.	The original Hebrew.
Sept. or LXX.	The Septuagint.
Targ.	The Targum.
Vulg.	The Vulgate.
Lit.	Literally.

INTRODUCTION.

WHAT we name 1 and 2 Kings was anciently only one book, called by the Jews 'the Book of Kings.'

To the date of its compilation we are guided by the latest events that are mentioned in it. The last chapter (2 Kings xxv.) concludes with the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, when Evil-Merodach released him from prison. This happened B.C. 562, after which date the book was written, and probably before B.C. 536, the year of the decree by Cyrus for the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon. Who the compiler was we have no means of deciding.

The Book of Kings was clearly meant to be a continuation of the Books of Samuel. The writer alludes continually in the life of Solomon to the promises which had been made by God to David and which are mentioned in the second of those books.

It is not however a history properly so called, but a selection from the historical documents of the nation made with a definite purpose. That the Compiler makes his extracts most faithfully we have many indications, notably that frequently-occurring phrase, 'unto this day,' a phrase true enough when the original documents from which our Compiler drew were written, but altogether inexact in B.C. 562, and only preserved because of the entire faithfulness to his copy of him who made the extracts.

The following is a summary of the Contents of the Book (1 and 2 Kings).

A. Closing days of the life of David. (i. 1—ii. 11.)

(1) Contest for the succession, i. 1—53. (2) David's dying charge, ii. 1—11.

B. King Solomon in all his glory. (ii. 12—x. 29.)

(1) The removal of his adversaries, ii. 12—46. (2) His piety and wisdom, iii. 1—28. (3) Solomon's magnificence and fame, iv. 1—v. 18. (4) Solomon's Temple, vi. 1—38. (5) His royal palace, vii. 1—12. (6) Works of Hiram, the Tyrian founder, vii. 13—51. (7) The feast of the Dedication, viii. 1—ix. 9. (8) Solomon's power, wealth and fame, ix. 10—x. 29.

C. Solomon is turned away from the Lord, and his prosperity is broken.

God's face is set against Solomon, xi. 1—43.

D. The divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah. (1 Kings xii. 1—2 Kings xviii. 12.)

(1) Prelude to the separation, xii. 1—24. (2) ISRAEL. The son of Nebat who made Israel to sin, xii. 25—xiv. 20. (3) JUDAH. The lamp preserved for David's sake, xiv. 21—xv. 24. (4) ISRAEL. The way of Jeroboam. The kings, xv. 25—xvi. 34. (5) Elijah. The prophet in Israel, xvii. 1—xix. 21. (6) Syrian invasion of Israel, xx. 1—43. (7) Naboth is stoned and is dead, xxi. 1—29. (8) Judah and Israel in alliance, xxii. 1—2 Kings iii. 27. (9) Elisha. 'He did wonders in his life,' 2 Kings iv. 1—viii. 15. (10) Fruits of the alliance between Judah and Israel, viii. 16—ix. 27. (11) ISRAEL. Jehu on the throne, x. 1—36. (12) JUDAH. Athaliah and Joash, xi. 1—xii. 21. (13) ISRAEL. The house of Jehu,

xiii. 1–25. (14) JUDAH. Amaziah meddling to his hurt, xiv. 1–22. (15) ISRAEL. Third and fourth generations of Jehu's house, xiv. 23–xv. 12. (16) ISRAEL and JUDAH. The Syro-Ephraimite war, xv. 13–xvi. 20. (17) ISRAEL. Last days of the ten tribes, xvii. 1–xviii. 12.

E. The two tribes. (2 Kings xviii. 13–xxv. 30.)

(1) Hezekiah, xviii. 13–xx. 21. (2) Manasseh and Amon, xxi. 1–26. (3) Josiah, xxii. 1–xxiii. 30. (4) The falling away. 'The Lord could not pardon,' xxiii. 31–xxv. 30.

The Compiler of the Books of Kings specifies three sources from which his narrative is drawn.

(1) The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41) as the authority for Solomon's reign.

(2) The Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah, which he mentions *fifteen* times (1 Kings xiv. 29; xv. 7; xv. 23; xxii. 45; 2 Kings viii. 23; xii. 19; xiv. 18; xv. 6; xv. 36; xvi. 19; xx. 20; xxi. 17; xxi. 25; xxiii. 28; xxiv. 5).

(3) The Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, which he quotes *seventeen* times (1 Kings xiv. 19; xv. 31; xvi. 5; xvi. 14; xvi. 20; xvi. 27; xxii. 39; 2 Kings i. 18; x. 34; xiii. 8; xiii. 12; xiv. 28; xv. 11; xv. 15; xv. 21; xv. 26; xv. 31).

Now in reference to the first of these sources, the Chronicler (who adheres so closely to the language of Kings throughout the history of Solomon that we are constrained to conclude that he drew his information from the same source,) specifies (2 Chron. ix. 29) three works as his authorities for that reign, viz. 'the Book (R.V. history) of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer.'

We find here the key to the origin and character of the materials accessible to the Compiler of Kings. The authorities for Solomon's reign were the writings of prophets contemporary with that king, and which subsequently were gathered into one treatise as 'the Acts of Solomon.' The prophetic spirit and religious drift of the whole history is thus accounted for. The record was not meant as mere history. It bears on the face of it the imprint of prophetic hands.

In like manner the Chronicler instead of 'the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah' mentions separate works for different reigns, but all coming from the writings of the prophets who flourished at the various periods. Thus (2 Chron. xii. 15) we have 'the Book (R.V. histories) of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer' quoted; in 2 Chron. xiii. 22 'the story (R.V. commentary) of the prophet Iddo'; in 2 Chron. xx. 34 'the book (R.V. history) of Jehu, the son of Hanani.' We are further told (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) that Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz wrote the history of Azariah (Uzziah), and (2 Chron. xxxii. 32) that same prophet wrote of the acts and good deeds of Hezekiah.

Allusions like these shew that there were in existence many separate histories written by prophets contemporary with the various kings, and that as they were completed they became incorporated in the national Chronicles of both kingdoms. The sources, then, from which these narratives are drawn must be regarded as contemporary with the events to which they relate, the Compiler only choosing from them what best suited his purpose, and being gathered in the main from prophetic histories, there will naturally be a similarity of motive pervading them all. To the Compiler we may ascribe those portions which compose the framework of each particular reign, i.e. the accounts of the accession and parentage, death and character of the several kings, in which there occurs very little variation of form. The data of all that is not of this character must be judged of from internal evidence. The uniformity of the framework of the book proves that it was put into its present form all by the same hands.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Solomon king over the whole nation 1015—975.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
17	**Rehoboam**	975	**Jeroboam**	22
			Jeroboam builds Penuel (1 K. xii. 25)	
	Shishak plunders Jerusalem (1 K. xiv. 25)			
3	**Abijam** (18th yr of Jeroboam) 1 K. xv. 1; 2 Chr. xiii. 1	957		
41	**Asa** (20th yr of Jeroboam) 1 K. xv. 9	955		
		954	**Nadab** (2nd yr of Asa) 1 K. xv. 25	2
		953	**Baasha** (3rd yr of Asa) 1 K. xv. 28	24
	War with Zerah the Ethiopian (2 Chr. xiv. 9)			
			War against Judah (2 Chr. xvi. 1)	
	Asa's alliance with Benhadad I. (1 K. xv. 18)			
		930	**Elah** (26th yr of Asa) 1 K. xvi. 8	2
		929	**Zimri** (27th yr of Asa) 1 K. xvi. 10	7 dys.
		929	**Omri**	12
			War between Omri and Tibni 4 years[1] (1 K. xvi. 21)	
		925	**Omri** *unopposed* (31st yr of Asa) 1 K. xvi. 23	
			Victories over the Moabites	
			Omri builds Samaria (1 K. xvi. 24)	
			Samaria invaded by the Syrians (1 K. xx. 34)	
		918	**Ahab** (38th yr of Asa) 1 K. xvi. 29	22
			Ahab marries Jezebel, princess of Zidon (1 K. xvi. 31)	

1 The duration of this war, about 4 years, must be included in the 12 years of Omri's reign (1 K. xvi. 23). Otherwise Ahab's accession could not be in the 38th year of Asa.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
25	**Jehoshaphat** (4th yr of Ahab) 1 K. xxii. 41	914		
			Benhadad II. attacks Samaria twice and is defeated (1 K. xx. 29)	
			Battle at Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab slain (1 K. xxii. 37)	
	Philistines and Arabians tributary to Judah (2 Chr. xvii. 11)	898	**Ahaziah** (17th yr of Jehoshaphat) 1 K. xxii. 51	2
			Moab regains its lost territory[2]	
		897	**Jehoram** (18th[3] yr of Jehoshaphat) 2 K. iii. 1	12
			War against Mesha king of Moab (2 K. iii. 4—27)	
8	**Joram** (5th yr of Jehoram) 2 K. viii. 6	893		
	Revolt of Edom and Libnah (2 K. viii. 22)			
	Judah ravaged by Philistines and Arabians (2 Chr. xxi. 17)			
1	**Ahaziah**[4] (12th yr of Jehoram) 2 K. viii. 25	885		
			Defence of Ramoth-Gilead (2 K. ix. 14)	
	Ahaziah slain by Jehu	884	*Jehoram slain by Jehu*	
			[5]	
6	**Athaliah** (2 K. xi. 3)	884	**Jehu** (2 K. x. 36)	28
	The temple desecrated (2 Chr. xxiv. 7)			
40	**Joash** (7th yr of Jehu) 2 K. xi. 4; xii. 1	878		
			Israel smitten by Syria (2 K. x. 32)	
		856	**Jehoahaz** (23rd yr of Joash) 2 K. xiii. 1	17[6]
	Hazael threatens Jerusalem (2 K. xii. 17)			
			Continued oppression of the Syrians (2 K. xiii. 22)	
		842	**Jehoash** (37th yr of Joash) 2 K. xiii. 10	16

2 This appears to be the time to which the conquests recorded on the Moabite stone are to be referred. The places had been won by Israel in the reign of Omri.

3 There are 3 statements concerning the commencement of the reign of Jehoram king of Israel. He is said (2 K. i. 17) to have begun to reign in the second year of Joram, king of Judah; then (2 K. viii. 16) in the fifth year before Joram; and thirdly, as noted above in the Table, in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. On the attempts to bring these 3 dates into accord, see the notes on the several verses.

4 In 2 K. ix. 29, the date is given as the 11th year of Jehoram. But such a variation may be accounted for by the Jewish mode of reckoning regnal years.

5 The period embraced between the accession of Jeroboam and the death of Jehoram is 91 years (975—884). That the totals of years ascribed to the kings amount to a larger number than this is due to the counting of one and the same year as the final year of one reign and the initial year of the next. Those totals are 95 for Judah and 98 for Israel. The total for Israel is greater than that for Judah because of the greater number of the accessions and the consequently greater number of the double reckonings. But if the three reigns reckoned as 2 years each in Israel, be counted, as they really were, for only one year each, the totals on both sides become the same.

6 From the 22nd year of Joash to the 37th year makes the reign of Jehoahaz to be little more than 14 years. While the length of the reign of Jehoash, from the 37th year of Joash to the 15th of Amaziah, would be somewhat more than 16 years. If we take the excess in one case to supplement the defect in the other the total time will be not far from correct.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Amaziah**[7] (2nd yr of Jehoash) 2 K. xiv. 1	841		
			Death of Elisha (2 K. xiii. 14)	
			Some territory recovered from Syria (2 K. xiii. 25)	
	Edom smitten by Judah (2 K. xiv. 7)			
	Defeat of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh (2 K. xiv. 13)			
		826	**Jeroboam II.** (15th yr of Amaziah) 2 K. xiv. 23	41[8]
52	**Azariah**[9] (27th [?] yr of Jeroboam) 2 K. xv. 1–2	811		
			Jeroboam recovers Damascus and Hamath (2 K. xiv. 25)	
		773	**Zechariah** (38th yr of Azariah) 2 K. xv. 8	$\frac{1}{2}$
		772	**Shallum** (39th yr of Azariah) 2 K. xv. 13	$\frac{1}{12}$
		772	**Menahem** (39th yr of Azariah) 2 K. xv. 27	10
			Pul, king of Assyria, comes against Israel	
			Menahem becomes vassal of Assyria (2 K. xv. 19)	
	Azariah towards the close of his reign is a leper			
		761	**Pekahiah** (50th yr of Azariah) 2 K. xv. 23	2
		759	**Pekah** (52nd yr of Azariah) 2 K. xv. 27	20[10]
16	**Jotham** (2nd yr of Pekah) 2 K. xv. 32, 33	758		
16	**Ahaz** (17th yr of Pekah) 2 K. xvi. 1	742		
			Pekah and Rezin king of Damascus attack Jerusalem	
	Ahaz seeks help from Assyria (2 K. xvi. 7)			
			Pekah's kingdom attacked by Tiglathpileser	
		730	**Hoshea** (12th yr of Ahaz) 2 K. xvii. 1	9
			Shalmaneser attacks Israel	
			Hoshea treats with So king of Egypt	
			Second attack of Shalmaneser	

7 Amaziah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash (2 K. xiv. 17).

8 Between the 15th year of Amaziah who reigned 29 years and the 38th of Azariah must be a period of about 52 or 53 years. Either the 41 years of text is wrong, or there was some interregnum of 11 or 12 years.

9 There is some error in this date. For Amaziah began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoash. Jehoash reigned 16 years. So he lived about 14 years contemporary with Amaziah. The latter lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash. Thus his whole reign was 29 years. Now in the 15th year of Amaziah began Jeroboam II. to reign. Hence Amaziah must have died, and Azariah succeeded in the 14th or 15th year of Jeroboam.

10 From the 52nd year of Azariah to the 12th year of Ahaz we have 28 years at least for the reigns of Jotham and part of Ahaz. The reign of Pekah must therefore have been longer than 20 years if Hoshea immediately succeeded him. That there is some error in connexion with the dates of Pekah and Jotham is apparent from 2 K. xv. 30–32.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Hezekiah** (3rd yr of Hoshea) 2 K. xviii. 1	726		
	Reformation of Hezekiah (2 K. xviii. 4)			
			Sargon succeeds Shalmaneser	
		721	*Samaria taken* (6th yr of Hezekiah) 2 K. xviii. 10 [11]	
	Samaria taken in the 6th year of king Hezekiah	721		
	Sennacherib invades Judah			
	Destruction of the Assyrian army			
	Hezekiah's sickness			
	Babylonian embassy to Jerusalem			
55	**Manasseh** (2 K. xxi. 1)	697		
	Manasseh carried captive to Babylon (2 Chr. xxxiii. 11)			
2	**Amon** (2 K. xxi. 19)	642		
31	**Josiah** (2 K. xxii. 1)	640		
	Restoration of the Temple			
	Finding of the book of the Law			
	Abolition of all idolatry			
	Great celebration of the Passover			
	Pharaoh-necoh comes against Assyria			
	Josiah slain at Megiddo			
¼	**Jehoahaz** (2 K. xxiii. 31)	609		
	Pharaoh-necoh carries Jehoahaz captive (2 K. xxiii. 33)			
11	**Jehoiakim** (2 K. xxiii. 36)	609		
	Jehoiakim tributary to Egypt (2 K. xxiii. 35)			
	Afterwards tributary to Assyria (2 K. xxiv. 1)			
	Judah attacked by Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites			
¼	**Jehoiachin** (2 K. xxiv. 8)	598		
	Egyptians driven back by the Babylonians (2 K. xxiv. 7)			
	Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon (2 K. xxiv. 12)			
11	**Zedekiah** (2 K. xxiv. 18)	598		
	Jerusalem besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (2 K. xxv. 1)	589		
	Capture and destruction of Jerusalem	587		
	Gedaliah appointed governor (2 K. xxv. 22)			
	The residue of the Jews flee unto Egypt (2 K. xxv. 26)			
	Jehoiachin kindly treated by Evil-Merodach	562		

11 The period from the accession of Jehu to the captivity of the 10 tribes embraces 163 years. The total of the regnal years of the kings of Judah amounts to 165, a difference easily introduced by the counting the same year twice over at the end of a reign and the beginning of another. But the regnal years assigned to the kings of Israel are little more than 143. Thus it is clear that about 20 years must be added, and this accords with the necessity seen above of giving 12 years more between Jeroboam II. and Zechariah, and 8 years more between Pekah and Hoshea.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED,

THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of 1
Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his 2
upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he
sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-
zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

I. **1.** *Then* [R.V. **And**] *Moab rebelled against Israel*] The less severance that is made between the portion of Ahaziah's history in 1 Kings and that which is given in this chapter the better. The so-called two books of Kings are but one, and the division has been made quite arbitrarily and in the middle of a reign. We have no record in Scripture how Moab came to be subject to Israel; but the inscription on the Moabite stone shews us that Israel and Moab were in conflict in the days of Omri, Ahab's father. Of their previous subjugation by David we read 2 Sam. viii. 2, after which we have no mention of them till this passage. It is by no means improbable that on the secession of the ten tribes, the Moabites became subjects of Israel, as the tribes on the east of Jordan all appertained to the northern kingdom. *after the death of Ahab*] Ahab's death was quite unexpected. Affairs were sure to be out of joint, and would invite subjects who felt their yoke heavy to try and cast it off. **2.** *And Ahaziah fell down through a* [R.V. **the** *lattice*] From the use of the word rendered 'lattice' elsewhere (cf. Job xviii. 8), it must mean some kind of net or trellis-work put in front of an open space, a window or a balcony. *and was sick*] The verb is employed, as here, of sickness caused by wounds, and also of ordinary disease (cf. 2 Kings xiii. 14) as in the case of Elisha. *inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron*] It was probably because Ekron was the nearest shrine of such a divinity that Ahaziah was sending thither. Ekron was the most northern of the five great Philistine cities, and so most easily within reach from Samaria. The latter portion of the name Baal-zebub signifies 'a fly,' and the LXX. taking them as in apposition rendered 'Baal, the fly,' as though the image of the god had been in that form. But it seems more natural to regard the words as in construction, so that 'the Baal (or lord) of flies' would be an epithet implying that the god was supposed to be an averter of flies. *whether I shall recover of this disease*] R.V. **sickness**. There must have been some oracle at Ekron, for it was an answer that Ahaziah

3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise,
go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say
unto them, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that*
4 ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now there-
fore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from *that*
bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And
5 Elijah departed. And when the messengers turned back unto
6 him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? And
they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and
said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and
say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it* not because *there is*
not a God in Israel, *that* thou sendest to inquire of Baal-
zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down
from *that* bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.
7 And he said unto them, What manner of man *was he* which
8 came up to meet you, and told you these words? And they
answered him, *He was* a hairy man, and girt *with* a girdle of

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sought. **3.** *Elijah the Tishbite*] See on 1 Kings xvii. 1. For a similar message to the prophet cf. 1 Kings xxi. 17. We know from 2 Kings iv. 25 that Elisha was often to be found on Mt Carmel where there was most likely a school of the prophets (see 2 Kings ii. 25). It may be that Elijah also made his most settled dwelling there. *the king of Samaria*] When the city of Samaria had been built and made the royal residence, the name 'Samaria' soon came to be used as the equivalent of 'Israel' for the kingdom of the ten tribes. See before 1 Kings xxi. 1. Is it *not because* there is *not a God in Israel*] R.V. **Is it because there is no God in Israel.** **4.** *And Elijah departed*] i.e. to fulfil the command which had been given him by the angel. The compiler of the Kings leaves out here any mention of the first meeting of the messengers by the prophet, because it may be assumed that what the prophet was bidden to do, he did. **5.** *And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said*] More literally with R.V., **And the messengers returned unto him and he said.** The pronoun refers to the sick king in Samaria. They could only have gone a little way on their journey, and their early reappearance caused him some surprise. *Why are ye now turned back?*] To accord with the previous clause, render with R.V., **Why is it that ye are returned?** **6.** *There came a man up to meet*] It would appear as though the prophet had met the messengers very early in their journey while they were going down from the hill on which Samaria was built. *Go, turn again*, &c.] These words are not in verse 3, but they are natural as a preface to the message there given. that *thou sendest*] Elijah speaking to the messengers (verse 3) said naturally 'that ye go,' but they put the words into a form suitable to their position as servants obeying an order.

7. *What manner of man* was he?] From the answer of the messengers it is clear that the dress and external peculiarities are what is here meant. From them Ahaziah was able to judge who the man must be. **8.** He was *a hairy man*] Literally, 'lord,

leather about his loins. And he said, It *is* Elijah the Tishbite. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his 9
fifty. And he went up to him: and behold, he sat on the top
of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the
king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said 10
to the captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire
come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.
And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him
and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain 11
of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him,
O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.
And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of 12
God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and
thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and
consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain of 13
the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty
went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and
besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee,

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i.e. possessor, of hair.' This might equally be used of the long hair of the head and beard, or of the shaggy cloak of hair worn as a garment. But when we know of him who came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' that 'his *raiment* was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins,' it seems better to accept the expression as a description of Elijah's dress. *It is Elijah the Tishbite*] Though the messengers might not know the prophet, the king, from his father's experience, must have heard a great deal about Elijah. **9.** *Then the king sent unto him*] Clearly Ahaziah's design was to arrest and punish Elijah, but considering that the prophet had appeared alone, the number of men sent out against him seems excessive. *a captain of fifty*] One of the subdivisions of the Jewish army was into 'fifties.' See 1 Sam. viii. 12. *he sat on the top of a* [R.V. **the**] *hill*] The definite article indicates that some particular hill is intended, therefore the suggestion that Elijah had already withdrawn to Carmel, and that the soldiers followed him thither, is most likely correct.

10. *If I be a man of God*] The spirit of the Law differs from that of the Gospel, and our Lord forbad (Luke ix. 55) his disciples the wish to imitate Elijah. But in the light which he had, Elijah felt that the majesty of Jehovah was outraged, when the name 'man of God,' which should have signified reverence, was used as a term of scorn. **11.** *Again also* [R.V. **And again**] *he sent*] Ahaziah has no regard for the lives that have been sacrificed.

And he answered] The verbs which signify 'to answer' are used both in Hebrew and in Greek for remarks made where, as here, no question has been asked. *Come down quickly*] The second captain goes in the spirit of the king and adds to the message of the first the demand of speedy obedience. We may therefore consider that his punishment was more deserved than that of the former. **13.** *came and fell on his knees*] He utters no com-

let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious
14 in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and
burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their
fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.
15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with
him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down
16 with him unto the king. And he said unto him, Thus saith
the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire
of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no
God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not
come down off *that* bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt
17 surely die. So he died according to the word of the LORD
which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead
in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of
18 Judah; because he had no son. Now the rest of the acts of
Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Israel?

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mand, but as a suppliant recognises the power of which Elijah was the representative. *be precious in thy sight*] A common phrase about a life that is spared. **14.** *Behold, there came fire down from heaven*] Here is another point in which the brevity of the narrative leaves much for conjecture. How was the news of the first and second destruction brought, and its nature described? The sending out of an armed band would no doubt attract attention, and persons who were near at hand when the meeting with the prophet took place may have brought the news. Was the second captain sent on his errand without any knowledge of what had happened to his predecessor? **15.** *be not afraid of him*] The only person to be feared was the king Ahaziah, irate because of the destruction of his soldiers and the defiance of his authority.

17. *So he died*] The whole narrative bears marks of extreme simplicity. Nothing but the barest facts are given, and no attempt is made to explain or account for any part of the history. *which Elijah had spoken*] We are told nothing of what must have been a most solemn interview, nor how it came to pass that the prophet was allowed to go without any punishment. Elijah disappears, as is usual in the history, without a word to tell us of his whereabouts.

And Jehoram reigned in his stead] This was the brother of Ahaziah. *in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah*] It is extremely difficult to make this statement fit with the rest of the chronological details of the books of Kings. The accession of Jehoram of Israel is here fixed in the second year of Jehoram of Judah, but in 2 Kings iii. 1 the same event is assigned to the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Now Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years (1 Kings xxii. 42). If therefore the two statements are correct Jehoram of Judah must, in some form or other, have been counted as king along with his father from about the 17th year of Jehoshaphat's reign. But according to 2 Kings viii. 16, it was in the 5th year of Jehoram of Israel that

And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah 2
into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha
from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I 2
pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And
Elisha said *unto him, As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul
liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down *to* Beth-el.

Jehoram of Judah began his reign. This of course must refer to his independent reign. But Jehoshaphat's reign of 25 years causes some difficulty, unless we suppose, as the Jews are said to have reckoned, that 25 years might really be only 23 and small portions of 2 other years. Then Jehoram of Israel, who began to reign in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, might have reigned little more than 5 years when Jehoshaphat died, and when Jehoram of Judah began the 8 years of his independent reign, he having reigned about the same period along with his father Jehoshaphat.

II. **1.** *when the Lord would take up Elijah*] The whole of the following narrative about Elijah's assumption must be drawn from what was communicated by Elisha. It was probably collected by some among the sons of the prophets, and added to the previous record of Elijah's life. into *heaven by a whirlwind*] The R.V., to preserve the same order of words as the original, has 'by a whirlwind into heaven.' The writer uses the figure which most nearly describes such a manifestation as that by which Elijah was translated. Human speech must of course fail to convey a true picture of so sublime a scene. *Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal*] No mention of Elisha as Elijah's companion is given in the history between the day of Elisha's call and the time of the events in this chapter. But in 1 Kings xix. 21 we read that Elisha 'ministered unto' Elijah, and in 2 Kings iii. 11 he is called 'Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah:' i.e. who performed for the aged prophet such services as a young attendant could yield to his master. We may therefore conclude that Elisha's time had been mainly spent in Elijah's company. The 'Gilgal' spoken of here must be a different place from that so named in Josh. iv. 19; v. 9, 10. **2.** *Tarry here*] Not only was Elijah himself conscious of some great event at hand but Elisha and the bands of prophets in Bethel and Jericho had an intimation that the departure of Elijah was very near. But the subject is too solemn for words. The two chief persons do not speak of it, and it is only when the separation is just about to take place that direct allusion is made to it (verse 9). *the Lord hath sent me to* [R.V. more precisely, **as far as**] *Beth-el*] The whole journey has been marked out for him, and devised that those who were to carry on the work after Elijah's departure might at this last interview see, and remember hereafter, the last looks, fixed on heaven, and the last words spoken, of him who had been their guide and father for a long while and amid constant perils. As *the Lord liveth, and* as *thy soul liveth*] The combination of the two phrases imparts much solemnity to the resolve. They are not unfrequently found

3 And the sons of the prophets that *were at* Beth-el came forth
to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD
will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he
4 said, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And Elijah said
unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath
sent me *to* Jericho. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and
as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came *to*
5 Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho
came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the
LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And
6 he answered, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And
Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD
hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth,
and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two
7 went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went,
and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

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apart. **3.** *the sons of the prophets*] They were called 'sons' in the same way as Elisha calls Elijah 'father.' See below verse 12. Whether the prophetic body in Gilgal had been warned before Elijah's departure from them that they would see him no more we are not told; but it seems highly probable that it was so from what is said of Bethel and of Jericho. *Beth-el*] This was the city which in old time had been called Luz. It lay in the northern part of the tribe of Benjamin, and when the kingdoms were divided and Jeroboam set up the calf-worship in Israel, Bethel was constituted the southern sanctuary. *came forth to Elisha*] The solemn event of which they had been forewarned checks them from addressing Elijah. *the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day*] We can see from this language that the communion between Elijah and Elisha had been much closer than that which the aged prophet had held with the other sons of the prophets. Hence he is rather spoken of as Elisha's master, than theirs. *hold you your peace*] Elisha had marked the solemn and meditative frame of his master's mind, and would not have it disturbed by any prolonged conversation between himself and the sons of the prophets. He cannot bear the questioning.

4. *hath sent me* to *Jericho*] The famous city which played a part in the history of Israel from their first entry into Canaan.

6. *to Jordan*] The journey tends across the river to that part of the country whither Elijah had at first fled for fear of Ahab.

they two went on] It was felt by the whole prophetic band that none but the faithful minister could presume to go as Elijah's companion at such a moment. **7.** *And fifty men*] It is not without surprise that we come at one single centre upon so large a body of men devoting themselves to a holy life in the service of Jehovah, while Ahab's children are still on the throne of Israel. There seems also to have been, beside Jericho and Bethel, similar colleges at Gilgal and perhaps on Carmel. *stood to view*] R.V. **over against them**, and similarly in verse 15. The Hebrew word originally signifies 'in front' of anything; but since we are *in front*

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapt *it* together, and smote 8
the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that
they two went over on dry *ground*. And it came to pass, 9
when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask
what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.
And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit
be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: 10
nevertheless, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it
shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so*. And it 11
came to pass, *as* they still went on, and talked, that behold,
there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted
them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind *into*
heaven. And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my 12

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of anything which faces us, and it may be said to be in front of us, the adverb in the text has a double use. Here it refers to the position of the sons of the prophets as they stood looking towards the departing couple, while in the next chapter (iii. 22) it is applied to the blood which the Moabites supposed they saw 'on the other side' of the valley. **8.** *And Elijah took his mantle*] In i. 8 the mantle was not mentioned, but there can be little doubt that the expression 'hairy man' above refers to the garment, and not to the head and beard. *and wrapt* it *together*] Making thus a sort of roll or rod. **9.** *when they were gone over*] Or, with margin of R.V., 'as they went over.' There was now no other place to visit, and the end was felt to be close at hand. Both probably thought how near they were coming to the spot where the earlier prophet Moses had been taken from the earth. *before I be taken away from thee*] The subject which had been filling both their hearts, the approaching separation, is at last mentioned. The master would help in whatever way he could the disciple who has been chosen to fill his place; and the question tests the character of Elisha. It shews that he felt that he must act with the same undaunted courage and boldness, and that he knew the needs of the times. *let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me*] The request is not, as some have thought, for twice the spirit of the departing master. What Elisha wants is what a father may rightly give to a firstborn son. **10.** *Thou hast asked a hard thing*] Because it was not Elijah's to bestow. He knew that except for God's strengthening power and comforting revelations his own heart would often have fainted. He therefore leaves the result to depend on God's judgement. If He permit Elisha to behold the assumption, then it shall be for a token that the petition is granted. **11.** as *they still went on, and talked*] Elisha is to remain to the last. And now that the silence has been broken, and the request made, we can understand how much Elijah would find of exhortation and encouragement to bestow as parting counsels on his successor. *a chariot of fire, and horses of fire*] Compare with this description the notice of the sight which Elisha's servant (2 Kings vi. 17) was permitted to behold, when he was terrified by the king of Syria's hosts. **12.** *My father, my father*] That this title of

father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes,
13 and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the
14 bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.
15 And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed them-
16 selves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast

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affection was given by the younger prophets to an elder seems clear from 1 Sam. x. 12, where the question 'Who is their father?' appears to refer to Samuel, and the whole passage seems to shew that men need not be surprised at Saul being among the prophets, if they only know that he is coming from close communication with Samuel.

the chariot [R.V. **chariots**] *of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*] Horses and chariots might be prepared in abundance, but they who had God's prophet as their guide, and his voice lifted to heaven for their help, were guarded by a might against which armies were powerless. *and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them*] Grief prevailing over every other feeling, and the Oriental demonstrativeness being uncontrollable even in the lonely gorges of Gilead. **13.** *He took up also the mantle of Elijah*] Not with any view of using it as clothing, but as a precious memento of the departed master. **14.** *and smote the waters*] He acts upon the faith that he would receive from God the power which he had desired. He is in a degree to represent Elijah and therefore he acts as Elijah had done. *Where* is *the Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Elijah?*] The question does not imply any doubt of God's presence, but should rather be explained as an entreaty for His power to shew itself and give a foretaste of the spirit of Elijah which had been promised. *they parted* [R.V. **were divided**] *hither and thither*] The word is the same as in verse 8. By this the Lord confirmed the promise made to Elisha by Elijah, and shewed that the spirit of the master had been bestowed on the disciple. **15.** *which* were *to view at Jericho*] R.V. **which were at Jericho over against him**. They were in a position from which they could see him, and he might see them. *bowed themselves to the ground*] Thus expressing their acknowledgement of him as their head, and the divinely appointed successor of Elijah.

16. *there be with thy servants fifty strong men*] Doubtless some from among the company of the prophets are meant. *seek thy master*] Throughout the narrative there is implied a much closer connexion between Elijah and Elisha than between Elijah and the rest. *the spirit of the Lord hath taken him up*] Compare

him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till *he* was 17
ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And when they 18
came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

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1 Kings xviii. 12, where Obadiah speaks of the spirit of the Lord carrying Elijah away to some unknown spot. The 'sons of the prophets' appear to have thought that the body of Elijah might be discovered somewhere, though God had taken away his soul.

and cast him] The use of the word 'cast' seems to indicate that they thought of the body of the prophet as merely the wrapping of that better part which God had taken to Himself, and that the body was of small account when the spirit had been taken from it.

Ye shall not send] There could be no doubt in Elisha's mind about the taking up of the body of his master. **17.** *till* he *was ashamed*] i.e. to refuse longer so urgent, though as he knew resultless, a petition. Hence some have thought the expression meant 'to a shameful extent' and was to be applied to the undue persistence of the petitioners. But the same phrase occurs in Judges iii. 25 of Eglon's servants who waited till they were ashamed to wait longer. **18.** *And when* [R.V. omits **when**] *they came again* [R.V. **back**] *to him*, (*for* [R.V. **while**] *he tarried at Jericho*)] The alteration of the R.V. of course removes the parenthesis. Having acceded to their request, he waited for the return of the searching party. We cannot dismiss the history of Elijah, which is brought to a close in this chapter, without some notice of the powerful hold which that history took upon the minds of the Jewish people, and of the prominent place which the prophet fills in the writings of the New Testament. In the Old Testament Elijah is rarely mentioned except in these chapters of the books of Kings, yet from the way in which Malachi (iv. 5, 6) foretells his coming again we can see that the character of his mission had been fully appreciated. It was felt to be a mission suited for evil times, for times when God might be expected to come and smite the earth with a curse, if men repented not. Elijah is therefore set forth as mighty rather in works than in words. His was hardly the day for preaching. He is also, nearly always, seen to be supported by the loftiest faith, and his message is on that account attested by signs more striking than usual. On the contrary among his countrymen the decay of faith was so complete, that no work of mercy was wrought by this prophet except for a stranger, the widow of Zarephath. For such a prophet men were looking in those evil days which preceded the coming of Christ, and from a like obscurity in the desert John the Baptist suddenly emerged in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 17) and all men recognised him as God's prophet. 'Art thou Elijah?' was the first question of those who saw and heard him (John i. 21) and Jesus pointed out to His disciples that the office of Elijah was truly fulfilled by the Baptist (Matth. xi. 14). The 'taking up' of Elijah was accepted by the Jews as a testimony to

19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray
thee, the situation of *this* city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth:
20 but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren. And he
said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they
21 brought *it* to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the
waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the
LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from
22 thence any more death or barren *land*. So the waters were
healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which
he spake.
23 And he went up from thence *unto* Beth-el: and as he was
going up by the way, there came forth little children out of
the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou

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the doctrine of man's immortality. 'Blessed are they that saw thee'...says the writer of Ecclesiasticus...'for we shall surely live.' Hence the great fitness of the appearance of Elijah with Moses at our Lord's Transfiguration.

19. *And the men of the city*] These are the ordinary inhabitants. From the sons of the prophets they would gather that Elisha was now gifted with the spirit and power of Elijah. The situation of Jericho, near the passage of the Jordan, was such as to attract a considerable population after it was rebuilt, and for the sake of the prosperity which came to them in other ways they were content to dwell in such an unwholesome place. Now however they saw a hope of benefit and with this thought they came to Elisha.

I [R.V. **we**] *pray thee*] The Hebrew is a mere interjection.

the situation of this *city* is *pleasant*] Jericho was a part of that country which, in Gen. xiii. 10, is compared to 'the garden of the Lord'. *the water* is *naught*] This word is of frequent occurrence in the English of the 16th century in the sense of 'bad.'

and the ground barren] R.V. **and the land miscarrieth**. The R.V. is explained in a margin 'casteth her fruit.' The evil effect was clearly in consequence of the hurtful water, for the healing of the spring is to bring a remedy for the other evils. **20.** *Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein*] The purity and freshness of the vessel were to typify the purification wrought upon the spring. Salt too is significant of preservation and purity. **21.** *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters*] The prophet by his words carries the thought away from the sign to the thing signified, the power of God exerted at the prayer of the prophet. *any more death or barren* land] R.V. **or miscarrying**. The R.V. thus conforms to its rendering of verse 19. **22.** *unto this day*] A note of a faithful reproduction by the compiler of what was written in some earlier document.

23. *from thence* unto *Beth-el*] Going back by the same way on which he had come some days before with Elijah. *there came forth little children*] Although the word may mean 'a little child' it is not necessary nor possible in the present passage to understand by it anything but such young persons as were well aware of the outrage and wickedness of their conduct. *Go up*] i.e. into

bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and 24
looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD.
And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare
forty and two children of them. And he went from thence to 25
mount Carmel, and from thence he returned *to* Samaria.

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab *began* to reign over Israel in 3
Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah,
and reigned twelve years. And he wrought evil in the sight 2
of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for
he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

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heaven, as they were told Elijah had done. They had already heard the history, and been taught that it afforded a proper theme for mockery. The fault of what they did was not so much in themselves, as in their elders. *thou bald head*] It would seem that Elisha was prematurely bald, for he lived a long time after Elijah's assumption, and this physical defect the insolent youths seized upon at once as a ground for ridicule. **24.** *And he turned back, and looked on them*] R.V. **And he looked behind him and saw them.** The young lads had come forth from the city, and Elisha had, as it seems, passed by them, before they began their mockery. *and cursed them in the name of the Lord*] It was not to avenge himself. Their insult to him was but a symptom of their hatred of all that was connected with the pure worship of Jehovah. *two she bears*] Of the prevalence of wild beasts in the immediate neighbourhood of cities we have indications in the history of David who slew a lion and a bear as he was keeping his father's flock. *tare forty and two*] The punishment would touch the parents in a way which nothing else could have done. **25.** *he went from thence to mount Carmel*] At which place, either for the purposes of devotion or because there also was a college of the prophets, Elisha was known to reside from time to time. *and from thence he returned to Samaria*] In which city we learn, from the story of Naaman in chapter v. below, that Elisha had a house.

III. **1.** *the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat*] How this year may be identified with 'the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat,' which in 2 Kings i. 17 is the date assigned to Jehoram's accession, is not clear. But see above on that passage. **2.** *And he wrought evil*] R.V. **And he did that which was evil.** *but not like his father, and like his mother*] Jehoram was not so far gone in evil as his brother Ahaziah had been. He kept indeed to the calf-worship of Jeroboam, but put down the Baal-worship which had been introduced by Jezebel from Phœnicia. *he put away the image* [R.V. **pillar**] *of Baal*] The Hebrew word is first used of the stone (Gen. xxviii. 18) which Jacob set up for a pillar at Bethel, and it seems likely, as it is used here and elsewhere in the accounts of Baal-worship, that these objects of worship were not figures, but of the nature of obelisks. *that his father had made*] This was no doubt some special pillar which the king had erected near his palace for his own and Jezebel's worship.

3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of
Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.
4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master, and rendered
unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an
5 hundred thousand rams, *with* the wool. But it came to pass,
when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against
6 the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went out of Samaria
7 the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went and

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3. *he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam*] The calf-worship was the token of Israel's separation from Judah, and had a political significance. Other kings beside Jeroboam would feel the danger of allowing the northern people to return to the temple at Jerusalem to worship. *which made* [R.V. **wherewith he made**] *Israel to sin*] **4.** *And Mesha king of Moab*] This name for the king of Moab occurs in the first line of the Moabite stone. In that inscription the Moabite king mentions his successes against Omri and Omri's successor and speaks of forty years as the time during which the conflict between Israel and Moab continued. Now Omri reigned six years (1 Kings xvi. 23) and Ahab's reign lasted twenty-two years (1 Kings xvi. 29) while Ahaziah reigned one or two years more. Thus the whole period of forty years would not be covered unless we take in the reign of Jehoram. The Moabite inscription naturally represents only the Moabite successes, but the Scripture narrative shews that the victory over Omri had been followed by a defeat in the days of Ahab. *a sheep-master*] The Moabite country by its character, valleys with fertile hill-sides and streams of water running through them, was eminently suited for a pastoral people. *rendered unto the king of Israel*] At the division of the kingdoms, Moab would fall to the share of the ten tribes, as it joined on to the south of the tribe of Reuben. Perhaps the tribute at first had not been so heavy as is here described, but had been increased on account of the struggles of Moab to throw off their yoke. *an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams*, with *the wool*] R.V. **the wool of** *an hundred thousand lambs, and of an hundred thousand rams*. There is nothing in the Hebrew for 'with.' The construction is: 'he rendered these animals, the wool.' So that it seems best to take the last word as explanatory of what has preceded, and to understand that what the Moabite king gave of these numerous animals was the fleece only.

5. *when Ahab was dead*] The sickness of Ahaziah had no doubt prevented him from taking any step during his brief reign to suppress the revolt of Moab. It is probable that during Ahaziah's time all those reconquests, that are mentioned in the Mesha tablet, were made by the Moabites, the king of Israel being able to offer no resistance. **6.** *went out of Samaria the same time*] R.V. **at that time**. The time indicated is probably the occasion of the first refusal of the tribute to Jehoram. *and numbered*] R.V. **mustered**. The verb implies a good deal more than the mere numbering. It includes all the inspection necessary to find whether an army is ready for war. **7.** *And he went and sent*] This

sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* my horses as thy horses. And he said, 8
Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the 9
king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetcht a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of Israel said, 10
Alas, that the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. But Jehoshaphat said, 11
Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants

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Hebrew verb 'to go' is not unfrequently placed before another finite verb, merely to express the idea of 'setting about' the act indicated by the following verb. *to Jehoshaphat*] The close family alliance existing at the time between the royal families of Israel and Judah made this a not unnatural request. *I will go up*] The hill country of Moab was considerably more elevated than the lands on the west of the Jordan. **8.** *And he said, Which way shall we go up?*] These are the words of Jehoram, who leaves to his ally, the elder monarch, the decision of the line of march.

through the wilderness of Edom] It would seem from 1 Kings xxii. 47 (see note there) that the Edomite royal family had come to an end, and that Jehoshaphat claimed the rights over that land which had been held in former times by Solomon. Hence the 'deputy' spoken of in that passage as 'king of Edom' would be one set up and maintained on his throne by the king of Judah. We can see from this how the way through Edom would be easy and would commend itself to Jehoshaphat. **9.** *So the king of Israel went*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 3. 1) tells how Jehoram and his army were hospitably and magnificently received in Jerusalem before they started on their march. *and the king of Edom*] The same author says that along with his own promise of help, Jehoshaphat had pledged himself to compel the king of Edom, his subject, to take part in the expedition. *and they fetcht a compass* [R.V. **made a circuit**] *of seven days' journey*] This old English phrase for taking a roundabout road is found here and 2 Sam. v. 23; Acts xxviii. 13. It is not easy to see why they should have gone so long a way about, when the country through which they were passing belonged to one of the allied kings. It might perhaps be necessary for the sake of finding provender. *and for the cattle*] R.V. **beasts**. **10.** *Alas, that* [R.V. **for**] *the Lord hath called*] The lamentation is caused by what Jehoram thinks will be their fate. **11.** *Jehoshaphat said*, Is there *not here a prophet of the Lord*] He made the same inquiry before the march to Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii. 7). The prophets who would be in attendance on Jehoram would be those connected with the worship of the calves. It is however interesting to note that Jehoram ascribes to the Lord Jehovah the calling together of the armies for

answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which
12 poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said,
The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and
13 Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And
Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with
thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the pro-
phets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him,
Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to
14 deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, *As*
the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were
it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of
15 Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now
bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel

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this expedition. *Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah*] The sort of service here indicated marks one who had been in constant attendance on his master. Hence the confidence of Jehoshaphat, 'The word of the Lord is with him.' **12.** *is with him*] This expression seems to imply a more than ordinary participation of the divine Spirit. *went down to him*] Such a man was not to be lightly summoned, and at such a crisis all reverence would be shewn to one on whose words it seemed that the chance of relief greatly depended. **13.** *What have I to do with thee?*] Equivalent to a command to be gone. Cf. Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; John ii. 4. *the prophets of thy father*] It would be no easy task, however willing Jehoram might be, to put down at once the worship of Baal. We know indeed that this was not done. Jehoram would be forced to trust to the power of opinion to banish the worship completely. It is so much more easy to encourage wrong than to get rid of it. *Nay*] i.e. Send me not away thus. **14.** As *the Lord of hosts liveth*] Probably the use of this expression is due to the circumstances. Jehovah, set before the Jews as the Lord of the armies both of heaven and of earth, would be fitly spoken of by this title at this time. There were three armies together all reduced to the greatest straits, and brought to sue for help to the prophet of the Lord. It was a fit opportunity for pointing out that though armies may be gathered, yet the issue of their undertaking is in His hands alone.

were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat] Thus the prophet continues the same thought. Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, is specially the protector of His people. *I would not look toward thee, nor see thee*] There is no sense employed with less labour to the possessor than that of sight. Hence the expression here used implies that Elisha would not have made the faintest effort for Jehoram's sake alone. **15.** *But now bring me a minstrel*] Of the power of music over the mind we have examples in the history of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 23) and also of the use of music by the companies of prophets (1 Sam. x. 5). But neither of these instances illustrates the case of Elisha as here described. From the result described here, viz. that the hand (that is, the influence and spirit) of the Lord came upon him, we may conclude that this

played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. And he 16
said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.
For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall 17
ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled *with* water, that ye
may drink, *both* ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And 18
this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will de-
liver the Moabites also into your hand. And ye shall smite 19
every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every
good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good

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was what Elisha wished for, and we may suppose that while the music went on his thoughts took shape, and found vent in prayer, till at length he was prompted inwardly what to say. *the hand of the Lord*] The phrase is most frequently employed in the Pentateuch and the historical books to signify God's power exerted in punishment. But it is also used of the divine power which strengthened and supported Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 46, and several times in Ezekiel of the spirit by which the prophet was possessed (cf. Ezek. i. 3; iii. 14, 22; viii. 1; xxxiii. 22; xxxvii. 1).

16. *Make this valley full of ditches*] R.V. **trenches**. The valley was a torrent bed which in the time of rain would become suddenly flooded with the water from the steep sides, and from the watershed above. This would soon run away, and the excavations mentioned here seem to have been meant to dam up the water, and prevent its rapid escape, that so the army might be supplied for a good while if necessary. **17.** *For thus saith the Lord*] Both the order to dig trenches, and the promise of water are prefaced in this solemn manner. *Ye shall not see wind*] The verb 'see' is used elsewhere of what is not visible but experienced by the other senses. So Exod. xx. 18, 'All the people *saw* the thunderings... and the noise of the trumpet'. After a drought wind is, in the East, the general precursor of rain. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 41, 45.

neither shall ye see rain] The prophet's language here implies that the cause of the coming supply of water would be rain falling elsewhere. *that ye may* [R.V. **and ye shall** *drink*] *your cattle*] These were the animals brought with them to be killed as occasion required for food. The *beasts*, next mentioned, are the beasts of burden. **18.** *And this is* but *a light thing*] For the expression cf. below ch. xx. 10. What God gives, He gives to the full. **19.** *and shall fell every good tree*] Some persons have seen in Elisha's language here a contradiction to Deut. xx. 19, where in the siege of a city the Israelites are forbidden to cut down the fruit trees. But in that place the reference is to the trees of Canaan, where the people were themselves to settle and live. The land of Moab was not to be occupied by them, therefore they were bidden to destroy everything in it. *stop all wells* [R.V. **fountains**] *of water*] As water in the East is mostly reached by digging, what is here meant is that all such places should be filled up, so that the work of obtaining water might have all to be done over again. *mar every good piece of land*] The expression is somewhat poetical, representing the land as mourning because it is

20 piece of land with stones. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that *were able to*
22 put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side
23 *as* red as blood: and they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now there-
24 fore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so

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rendered unfruitful. **20.** *when the meat offering was offered*] R.V. **about the time of offering the oblation**. The term *meat offering* has become misleading to modern English readers, because it would now imply that flesh of some kind formed a part of the offering; whereas the oblation here spoken of consisted (see Lev. ii. 1) of fine flour, oil and frankincense. Hence R.V. has rendered the word very frequently 'meal offering,' and in some places as here, where there was no need to be specific, by 'oblation.' *by the way of Edom*] The fall of rain, to which the supply of water was due, would thus be unknown to the Moabites even more than to the Israelites.

21. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when all the Moabites heard*] By the circuitous journey which the armies had made their march would be less observed, and it would only be at the time of their appearance on the frontier that the object of their expedition would become known. But the casting off the yoke of Israel, and the freeing of their land from such a burdensome tribute made the war popular in Moab, and all were prepared to do their duty against the invaders. *they gathered all that* were able to *put on armour*] R.V. **they gathered themselves together, all**, &c. The expression indicates the enthusiasm with which each man appealed to his neighbour. *and stood in the border*] This would naturally be a height dividing their country from the land of Edom.

22. *they rose up early in the morning*] When the rays of the sun would be shining obliquely on the water, and would cause it to have an unusual colour. *the water on the other side*] R.V. **over against them.** as *red as blood*] This would be partly due to the slanting rays of the sun, and partly perhaps to the redness of the land through which the water had flowed. **23.** *the kings are surely slain* [R.V. **destroyed**], *and they have smitten one another*] R.V. **each man his fellow.** The Moabites knew of the contests which had been between Israel and Judah in times past, and might readily fancy that the peace which had been made between Ahab and Jehoshaphat had now been broken through some difference during the expedition. **24.** *the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites*] The hasty and irregular manner in which the Moabites rushed forward, with no thought but of an easy

that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country. And they beat down 25
the cities, and *on* every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left *they* the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it. And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was 26
too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should 27
have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against

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booty, gave the Israelites an opportunity which otherwise they would not have had. *but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country*] R.V. **they went forward into the land smiting the Moabites.** **25.** *cast every man his stone*] Thus ensuring that the ground should be made useless for the pasturage of flocks. *only in Kir-haraseth left* they *the stones thereof*] R.V. **until in Kir-hareseth** only **they left the stones thereof.** What is meant to be expressed is that the only town of which the stone walls were allowed to remain was this capital city of Moab. Probably it was the only city with any solidity of walls.

26. *he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords*] R.V. **sword**. In this phrase the singular is of the more frequent occurrence in A.V. The Moabite king desired to cut his way through the besiegers and so to escape, and he made the attempt in the direction of the king of Edom's troops, either because that was the weaker side of the allied host, or else because he thought he might be received by the Edomite king, and that they together might turn against the combined forces of Israel and Judah. **27.** *his eldest son*] i.e. his own eldest son, not as has been explained by some, the eldest son of the Edomite king. His thought was to offer such a sacrifice as would be most acceptable. Hence he gave what was most precious to him. *upon the wall*] This was no doubt done to shew to the Israelites that every means had been taken by him to secure the aid of the local divinity against his assailants. Such a sacrifice they might think could hardly fail of obtaining the help sought by it. *And there was great indignation* [R.V. **wrath**] *against Israel*] The word rendered 'wrath' or 'indignation' is nearly always used of the wrath of God against offenders. But it appears difficult to take it in that sense here. God's promise through Elisha was that Israel should conquer, and they were bidden to smite every fenced city and every choice city. Therefore unless we conceive that underlying God's message there was conceived some point beyond which they were not to go, and that the forcing of the king to offer his son was of this character, it is hard to see how they could be held to blame and worthy of God's wrath. They were in no position to know what the king intended, nor, when they saw him on the wall, to prevent his sacrifice. It seems better therefore to take 'wrath' in this place to

Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

4 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be 2 bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot 3 of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all 4 thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, 5 and thou shalt set aside *that* which *is* full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who

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signify 'wrath of men'. This can be either of what the man feels himself, or of what others feel towards him. Taking the latter sense, the meaning here would be that in the minds of the men of Judah and Edom there rose indignation that they had been brought to partake in an expedition which led to such a dreadful sacrifice. If we apply the word to the feelings of the Israelites themselves, we get the sense that they were grieved and angry at so terrible a result, and so hastened to leave the dreadful scene. *and they departed from him*] i.e. from the king of Moab. This seems to shew that it was the horrible act of the king which made them ready to be gone at once. Had no such sacrifice as is here described taken place they would have prosecuted the siege according to the prophet's word. But now they withdrew in horror.

IV. **1.** *a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets*] It appears from this that the members of the colleges of prophets did not withdraw themselves from common domestic life altogether. It may be that from time to time, during seasons of devotion, they joined the companies at Beth-el, Gilgal or elsewhere, and then returned to their home duties. *unto Elisha*] This appeal shews us that Elisha was regarded as the head of the whole prophetic band. *and the creditor is come*] It was allowed by the Mosaic law (Lev. xxv. 39—41) that a debtor and his children (and so, if he were dead, as here, his children only) might be taken as bondservants by a creditor, and the debt cancelled by their labour.

sons] R.V. **children**. That they were sons we see from the course of the narrative, but the Hebrew word is not the same as in verse 4. **2.** *save a pot of oil*] It was not the finest oil, such as would be used for cooking food, that she had, but the more common kind which every Oriental makes use of after a bath.

3. *borrow thee vessels*] Another sign of indigence. **4.** *And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door*] R.V. more literally, **And thou shalt go in and shut**, &c. There was to be no display made in connexion with the miracle. For this cause as well as to avoid interruption, the door was shut. **5.** *who* [R.V.

brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out. And it came 6
to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her
son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is*
not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and 7
told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay
thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where 8
was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.
And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither
to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, 9
I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God, which passeth by

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they] *brought* the vessels *to her*] The widow's unquestioning obedience, in which her sons also imitated her, has its reward.

6. *she said unto her son*] Both sons had helped, but it would be to one that her request 'Bring me another' would be addressed. *And the oil stayed*] i.e. ceased to flow any longer. **7.** *she came and told the man of God*] Feeling that the disposal of the oil should be made according to the direction of him who had told her what to do. *pay thy debt*] Like several of Elisha's miracles, e.g. the curing the noxious water at Jericho (ii. 19—22), this multiplying of the widow's oil was wrought for the help of those connected with the colleges of prophets. And as we read the frequent mention of these bodies, in the histories both of Elijah and Elisha, we cannot but wonder at the righteous zeal which shewed itself in this way in the northern kingdom. *live thou and thy children* [R.V. **sons**] *of the rest*] The oil was all to be sold, and the money that was over, when the debt was paid, would be a means of support till the sons, now no longer forced to labour as slaves, might find a way to earn a living.

8. *And it fell on a day*] The Hebrew noun signifies 'on that day,' 'at that time,' and indicates a closer connexion with the preceding narrative than would be gathered from the A.V. *Elisha passed to Shunem*] In Joshua xix. 18, Shunem is among the places allotted to the tribe of Issachar. It is also mentioned as the place where the Philistines encamped before the battle of Gilboa. *a great woman*] As the Shunammite woman had a husband still alive, it would be more natural to speak of him as 'great' in the sense of 'rich,' and perhaps here the meaning is rather 'influential.' She was clearly a person of independent character, and one who could act when the occasion demanded it. *she constrained him to eat bread*] The journeys of Elisha to and fro had somehow become known to her and she offered him hospitality. *as oft as he passed by*] Apparently the allusion is to such rounds as the chief of the prophetic colleges would make to the different centres at which they were gathered. **9.** *she said unto her husband*] The woman was not content with providing food, but desired to provide a lodging also. *I perceive that this is a holy man of God*] Probably before the first invitation the woman had learnt something of Elisha's work and the reason of his frequent journeys. Now when he became their guest she had full opportunity of ob-

10 us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on
the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and
a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh
11 to us, *that* he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day,
that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and
12 lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this
Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before
13 him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou
hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done
for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the
captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine
14 own people. And he said, What then *is* to be done for her?
And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her hus-

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serving the way in which he laboured to keep alive the true worship of God in the land. The existence of a family like this of the Shunammite is evidence that amid much corruption God was not yet forgotten in the ten tribes. **10.** *a little chamber...on the wall*] The Hebrew might mean either a chamber with a wall, or a building above the usual roof of the house and so supported by the walls. The latter seems to be the sense required here, for it is said (verse 21) that the mother *went up* when she wished to lay the dead child upon the prophet's bed. *a bed*] The articles here named form the proper furniture of an Eastern room, where a superabundance of such articles is nowhere found. *a stool*] The word probably means the couch or divan which runs along the wall of an Eastern dwelling-room. *he shall turn in*] Preparation was made so that the prophet and his servant might be at rest, and come and go when they pleased. **12.** *to Gehazi his servant*] Gehazi probably stood in the same position to Elisha which the latter had held towards Elijah, though the men were utterly different in character. *she stood before him*] i.e. before Elisha. It is clear that Elisha's character inspired great reverence. **13.** *And he said unto him*] i.e. Elisha to Gehazi. The prophet does not himself address the woman. *thou hast been careful for us with all this care*] R.V. in margin gives 'hast shewed us all this reverence'. The use of such words bears out what has just been said of the distance kept between Elisha and the family at Shunem, though they were his entertainers.

wouldst thou be spoken for, &c.] The prophet offers to use his influence, if it can be of any service to his hostess, with the powers of the land. And we cannot but be struck all through his history with the close intimacy which existed between Elisha and the royal family. *or to the captain of the host*] If we may take Joab, in David's time, as an example, this officer possessed immense influence. *And she answered, I dwell among mine own people*] The Shunammite shews she has no necessity, for all those among whom she lives are friends and relatives. There is no foe to ask protection against, and the kindred are enough to secure her against enemies. **14.** *And he said*] Clearly, to Gehazi.

Verily she hath no child] R.V. **son**. The R.V. is correct,

band is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called 15
her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, 16
according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And
she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto
thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son 17
at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the
time of life.

And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he 18
went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his 19
father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him
to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought 20
him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then*
died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man 21
of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out. And she 22
called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one

though it seems from the whole narrative that the woman was childless. **15.** *And he said, Call her*] It would seem from these words that the woman had gone away at once after saying she had no wants. *she stood in the door*] Reverence for Elisha kept her at the threshold. **16.** *according to the time of life*] R.V. **when the time cometh round**. The phrase is the same which is used Gen. xviii. 14 to the childless Sarah before the birth of Isaac. *thou man of God*] She appeals to him in the character which she felt to be most sacred. *do not lie unto thine handmaid*] The blessing promised was so great, and appeared so unlikely of fulfilment, that the woman implores Elisha not to raise false expectations in such a matter. **17.** R.V. 'And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season, when the time came round, as Elisha had said unto her.'

18. *And when the child was grown*] During the years which had elapsed since the birth of the child the journeys of the prophet between Samaria and Carmel had no doubt still continued, and the feeling of reverence felt by the Shunammite at first, had grown, as we see from the subsequent narrative, into complete trust.

to his father to the reapers] The whole picture is of a well-to-do home, where all was abundant. **19.** *My head, my head*] The description points to an attack of sunstroke, where the first symptom is pain in the head. *to a lad*] R.V. **to his servant.** The Hebrew has a definite noun 'to the servant', i.e. who was at hand to carry out any order. **20.** *he sat on her knees till noon*] The attack was in the early part of the day, when the oblique rays of the sun appear to be most dangerous. **21.** *she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God*] Her thoughts at once go to Elisha and she puts the dead boy into the prophet's chamber, perhaps with the thought that she will bring Elisha back with her, and then he will find the child at once. **22.** *And she called unto her husband*] He appears to have been at no great distance; though the verb is used at times of a message sent by a servant.

one of the young men] R.V. **servants.** There were servants who could be spared though the harvest was in hand. *one of*

of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the
23 man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt
thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath.
24 And she said, *It shall be* well. Then she saddled an ass, and
said to her servant, Drive, and go *forward;* slack not *thy*
25 riding for me, except I bid thee. So she went and came unto
the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when
the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his
26 servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite: run now, I pray
thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it*
well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she
27 answered, *It is* well. And when she came to the man of God
to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near
to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone;

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the asses] The ass was the usual beast for riding on a journey. In such a country as Palestine the surefootedness of the animal is invaluable. *that I may run to the man of God*] The request causes her husband little astonishment. **23.** it is *neither new moon, nor sabbath*] These were the principal occasions of assembling for worship, and it is clear from this history that even in Israel, while the house of Ahab was still on the throne, religious services were regularly held by the prophets in the name of Jehovah. It shall be *well*] The Heb. word is literally 'Peace.' The woman appears to use it as a means of putting aside further questioning. So it would be equivalent to 'Let be.' 'Say no more.' 'Let me have my way.' **24.** *slack not* thy *riding for me*] R.V. **slacken me not the riding.** The R.V. thus avoids the pronominal adjective, which has no equivalent in the Hebrew. The servant seems to have been one to run by the side of the rider as a driver, and as a protection, to be ready also in case of mishap. **25.** *to mount Carmel*] The distance would occupy five or six hours' riding. The whole narrative gives the impression that on Carmel there was a centre of prophetic teaching and religious worship, and that the family from Shunem were among the frequenters thereof. Elisha discerns her coming in the distance and is able to say to Gehazi who she is some time before she arrives. **26.** *run now, I pray thee*] There is a touch of deep feeling in the action of Elisha. He knows that there must be some special reason for a visit at this unusual time, and he would learn, even before the mother is near enough for him to hear her, whether there is trouble at home which has brought her to Carmel.

And she answered, It is *well*] The word means, as was noted on verse 23, Peace, and we can only think that she gives this answer to Gehazi's question, that she may avoid more words. **27.** *to the hill*] Elisha had been standing on a height which enabled him to command a view of the road for some distance. *she caught him by the feet*] She fell down, and clung to his feet in the attitude of humblest supplication. *Gehazi came near to thrust her away*] The servant thought that the dignity of his master was

for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire 28
a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then 29
he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go *thy way:* if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not *again:* and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of 30
the child said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And 31
Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into 32
the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, 33
and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon 34

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not sufficiently regarded by the Shunammite. *The Lord hath hid* it *from me*] We need not conclude from these words that the prophet expected to be warned supernaturally concerning those who were likely to come to seek his help. The family at Shunem had been made by the prophet a subject of intercession with the Lord. It is therefore not unnatural that Elisha should consider that their misfortunes might be specially announced. **28.** *Did I desire a son*] The words are almost reproachful and make it clear to the prophet that the child is dead. **29.** *Gird up thy loins*] With the loose flowing garments of Orientals it is needful when haste is desired, to gather them up and bind them together so that they may not impede the traveller. *take my staff in thine hand*] It is not easy to see the purpose of this order. The staff was to be laid on the face of the child, but it produced no effect. It may be that Elisha thought God would allow the restoration of the child on the imposition of the staff. *if thou meet any man, salute him not*] An injunction necessary in the East where the salutations are full of form, and consume much time.

30. *I will not leave thee*] Whether the staff sent by Gehazi may have an effect, she cannot know. Her only security is in Elisha's presence, and with him she will return to her desolated home. **31.** there was *neither voice, nor hearing*] It means that no sign of returning life was seen. *Wherefore he went again*] R.V. **returned.** The same word is so rendered below in verse 35. *The child is not awaked*] This does not mean that Gehazi thought the child was not dead. He knew this as well as the mother. But 'sleep,' even in the Old Testament, is used for its more dreadful sister 'death.' **32.** *upon his bed*] i.e. Elisha's bed, in the chamber which was set apart for the prophet and in which the mother had left her child. **33.** *shut the door upon them twain*] There is to be no witness, no parade made of the child's restoration. *and prayed unto the Lord*] The whole narrative must be compared with the action of Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 17—23). **34.** *And he went up*] The verb is

the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child
35 waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child neesed seven times, and the child opened his
36 eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he
37 said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and
39 seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went

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used in 2 Kings i. 4, of getting upon a bed. *and lay upon the child*] (Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 21.) Probably Elisha knew of the acts of Elijah at Zarephath, and followed that example. *stretched himself upon the child*] R.V. **upon him**. So the Hebrew, and there can be no misunderstanding such as to require the noun to be repeated. *the flesh of the child waxed warm*] The returning life is slowly given, but the first signs of restoration must have strengthened the zeal, and given fervour to the prayers which no doubt filled every moment of the time of waiting and watching.

35. *Then he returned*] i.e. left the bed. *and walked in the house to and fro*] The exertion which he had used, and the emotion and anxiety he felt, would be overpowering. Hence the need for a change of posture. *the child opened his eyes*] The second effort, supported as it was, we may be sure, by repeated prayer, obtains a gracious answer. The dead child is brought to life. **36.** *Take up thy son*] Cf. Christ's words, Luke vii. 15.

37. *fell at his feet*] In token of her deep gratitude. This she shews before she will give way to the natural feeling of joy over her restored child.

38. *Elisha came again to Gilgal*] Elisha had been at Gilgal with Elijah, but there is no need to suppose that 'came again' alludes to that visit. Gilgal was a centre of prophetic activity, and it is probable that it was visited frequently both by Elijah and Elisha. *and* there was *a dearth in the land*] The allusion is probably to the famine foretold in viii. 1. That some of the incidents related before that chapter occurred after the famine see note on viii. 4. *the sons of the prophets* were *sitting before him*] They would naturally gather round the great prophet, made famous by a large share of Elijah's spirit, and catch at all he had to say. *unto his servant*] Probably some one of the sons of the prophets, appointed to wait on Elisha while he tarried at Gilgal. **39.** *And one went out*] As the needful services were performed by the members of the college among themselves, it was no doubt one of them who went into the field to gather such herbs

out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not. So 40
they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. But he said, Then bring meal. And 41
he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought 42
the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his 43

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as he could find. *a wild vine*] i.e. some wild plant with vine-like tendrils, named here 'vine' for want of knowledge of its true name. *wild gourds*] The Hebrew word is explained as meaning 'wild cucumber,' an egg-shaped fruit with very bitter taste. But the prickly fruit of this plant could hardly be thought fit for pottage. Others think that the 'colocynth' is meant. This fruit might be mistaken for a melon. *for they knew* them *not*] Nobody among the brotherhood had sufficient skill of plants to stop their comrade. **40**. *they cried out*] The bitter taste shewed them that something was wrong, and their thoughts at once suggested that what they had eaten was poisonous. The fruit of the colocynth would produce sickness very soon, but there is no reason to suppose that there was enough in the pottage to kill. *O thou man of God*] The R.V. omits 'thou.' *they could not eat thereof*] They had only just tasted the noxious dish and so no ill effects had followed. **41.** *bring meal*] He employs something which is wholesome and nourishing as a sign of the change that was to be wrought in the pottage. But we are not to attribute healing virtue to the meal that was used, any more than we should think that the salt (2 Kings ii. 21) was the means of healing the waters at Jericho.

42. *from Baal-shalisha*] R.V. **Baal-shalishah.** The place cannot have been remote from Gilgal. The 'land of Shalishah' was close to mount Ephraim, as we see in the account of Saul's search for the asses (1 Sam. ix. 4). Probably Baal-shalishah was one village or town of this district. *bread of the firstfruits*] On the custom of bringing an offering to the prophets, cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7. *full* [R.V. **fresh**] *ears of corn*] This is the rendering of one word in the Hebrew, which from its use elsewhere seems to mean the first gathered and best of the corn. The passages for comparison are Lev. ii. 14; xxiii. 14, in each of which the change has been made to 'fresh' in R.V. *in the husk thereof*] R.V. **in his sack.** The word is only found here. It is agreed however that it signifies some sort of bag. **43**. *And his servitor* [R.V. **servant**] *said*] As the word here rendered *servitor* is used of Joshua, the minister of Moses, it seems likely that Gehazi, the

servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave
44 *thereof.* So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof,* according to the word of the LORD.

5 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was
2 also a mighty *man* in valour, *but he was* a leper. And the Syrians had gone out *by* companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited
3 on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria; for he

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special attendant on Elisha, is here meant. *before an hundred men*] Probably the number of the prophetic college at Gilgal.

He said again] R.V. **But he said.** **44.** *they did eat, and left* thereof] Compare with this the miracles of our Lord (Matth. xiv. 15—21; xv. 32—38; John vi. 5—14). In this account of Elisha there is however not much dwelling on the increase of the bread by a miracle, and we are left to accept the result as either brought about in that way, or by the appetites of the men being satisfied with a small quantity.

V. **1.** *honourable*] The idea is 'one accepted and acceptable.' *because by him the Lord had given deliverance*] R.V. **victory.** That the Lord was the deliverer is the thought of the Jewish writer. The Syrians would have put the case differently.

deliverance unto Syria] That Naaman was the man 'who drew a bow at a venture' and smote Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead, and thus gained victory for Syria, is a conjecture of Jewish commentators for which there is not the smallest foundation. *a mighty* man *in* [R.V. **of**] *valour*] The disease with which Naaman was afflicted must have been of a less malignant character than leprosy mostly is, otherwise he would have been physically incapable of soldierly duties. *a leper*] The laws of the Jews concerning the separation of lepers from the rest of the people are given in Lev. xiii. and xiv., and are extremely stringent. Clearly in Syria there were no such regulations, for Naaman goes with the host to war, returns and lives at home with his wife and the household, and attends on the king when he goes to worship in the house of Rimmon.

2. *had gone out* by *companies*] R.V. **in bands.** The idea is of plundering parties, who made forays upon their neighbours.

a little maid] These maraunders carried away captives as well as spoil. **3.** *Would God*] This interjection is found only here and in Ps. cxix. 5. There it is rendered '*O that* my ways were directed.' *the prophet that* is *in Samaria*] Elisha had a house in the city of Samaria, as we see from verse 9, and also from vi. 32.

he would recover him] The verb, which commonly means 'to assemble' or 'gather together,' is very expressive in the mouth of the Israelitish maiden, for the leper in Israel must keep himself apart, and never *be gathered* with the rest of the people.

would recover him of his leprosy. And *one* went in, and told 4
his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the
land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I 5
will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed,
and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand
pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought 6
the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter
is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my
servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.
And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the 7
letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill
and to make alive, that this *man* doth send unto me to re-
cover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you,
and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was *so*, 8

4. *And* one *went in*] On the margin the R.V. has 'he.' But it is better to insert an indefinite nominative. It is not likely that Naaman himself was the reporter. *and told his lord*] i.e., Naaman's lord, the king of Syria. **5.** *Go to, go*] Naaman was so valued by the king that not a moment must be lost.

I will send a letter] There must have existed at this time such relations between Israel and Syria as made correspondence between the two kings possible. *unto the king of Israel*] The king is not named, but it seems likely that the activity of Elisha was mainly in the reign of Jehoram, Ahab's son. *and took with him ten talents of silver*] The silver and the gold were in bars and were paid away by weight. A talent of silver is said to have been worth about £375, and gold was about ten times the value of silver.

ten changes of raiment] Especially valued in the East, and often included in summaries of wealth. **6.** *he brought the letter to the king of Israel*] The Syrian king would conclude that the prophet was at the king's command, and so he had only to write to the king, and all would be done that could be done. *Now* [R.V. **And now**] *when this letter*] This is not the commencement of the letter. The writer only extracts from it the sentence which contains the request. *that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy*] The Syrian king speaks as though the cure were to be Jehoram's work. But of course he only required of the king that he should use his power with the mighty prophet. **7.** *that he rent his clothes*] Sometimes the act was a sign of grief as in ii. 12 above and Gen. xxxvii. 29; sometimes as here, of horror and alarm. *to kill and to make alive*] The disease of leprosy was incurable, and so the request that it should be cured was such as the Author of life alone could grant. *doth send unto me*] The knowledge of Elisha's mighty acts must have been less before the mind of the king than of his subjects, or he would not have failed to see that the request might be granted by God through His prophet. *he seeketh a quarrel against me*] The R.V. has put 'occasion' on the margin. It is only the one who feels his superiority that ventures on seeking a quarrel, and from the timid words of Jehoram we may conclude that he thought the Syrians

when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of
Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying,
Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to
9 me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So
Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood
10 *at* the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a mes-
senger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times,
and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be
11 clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said,

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more than a match for him; as was only natural, since they had defeated his father at Ramoth-Gilead not long before. He dreaded a renewal of such a conflict. **8.** *that he sent to the king*] The prophets of Jehovah were now in no such peril as they had been in Ahab's days. Elisha has his house in the royal city, and has no fear of sending a message to the palace. *that there is a prophet in Israel*] i.e. a true messenger of the God who can kill and make alive. **9.** *with his horses and with his chariot*] R.V. **chariots.** In attendance on so great a man as Naaman there would be many persons on horseback and in carriages. **10.** *Elisha sent a messenger unto him*] The princely cavalcade waited at Elisha's door, but the prophet did not come forth. He wished to prevent any thought of himself as the worker of the cure coming into Naaman's mind. The Syrian captain's idea was, as we can see from the sequel, that Jehovah was specially the God of the land of Israel. If he were sent to one of the streams of that land, he would be most likely to connect, as he actually did, his recovery with the might of the God of Israel. The prophet would therefore only be the mouthpiece of Jehovah, and for this reason sent his direction by a messenger. *Go and wash in Jordan*] Naaman would be quite sure that the waters of the Jordan were not a cure for leprosy, otherwise there would have been no lepers in Israel. The journey from Samaria to the river would be a great test of his faith, and would set the matter before him in a very different aspect from that in which he had before viewed it. He had come as a mighty person to present his request to a king. He is first of all brought to the humble door of the prophet, and from thence sent on a further journey to what he would naturally look on as an insignificant stream. It was not to the king, nor the prophet, nor the river, that his healing could be ascribed if it were effected. We can understand how difficult this new lesson was for Naaman to learn. *seven times*] Since the seven days of God's first week, the number 'seven' has been held somewhat more sacred than other numbers. Hence its frequent mention in religious services and ceremonial. *and thy flesh shall come again to thee*] The expression is well-suited to the case, for in leprosy the body or the part affected is covered with an incrustation, so that the flesh seems all to have disappeared. *and thou shalt be clean*] The Hebrew has the imperative 'and be thou clean,' as is noted on the margin of R.V. Elisha is speaking as Jehovah's minister, thus the imperative is not unfitting. **11.** *But*

Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. *Are* not Abana 12
and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came 13
near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it?* how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped *himself* seven 14
times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his com- 15
pany, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold,

Naaman was wroth] He had expected that his wish would have been accomplished at once, and that more display would have been made over a case like his. The God of Israel would receive some credit for the cure of the Syrian commander. And was he to be sent off in this way, without any parade or notice, to wash in the muddy waters of the Jordan? *Behold, I thought*] Literally 'I said unto myself.' *and strike* [R.V. **wave**] *his hand over the place*] The verb is the one so constantly used to describe the manner of the wave-offering. Naaman's notion seems to have been that Elisha would rub his hand backward and forward, over the affected parts; or perhaps make passes over them. **12.** Are *not Abana* [R.V. **Abanah**] *and Pharpar, rivers* [R.V. **the rivers**] *of Damascus*] The Abanah has been identified with the larger of the two rivers which now water Damascus. The second river is now named 'Awaj' and does not flow so close to the city, but one branch of it is still called 'Wady *Barbar*' in which we may probably trace the remnant of the ancient name 'Pharpar.' **13.** *his servants came near*] The servants of Naaman were probably persons nearly his equals in everything except reputation, and so they could come and speak freely to him. *My father*] One of them of course was spokesman for the rest. There is no other instance where servants address their master in such terms.

some *great thing*] They are thinking perhaps of some deed of prowess, befitting the 'mighty man of valour. **14.** *Then went he down*] His rage had first gone down, and thus he was in a fitter condition to undertake the journey commanded him.

and dipped himself *seven times*] Not only in the journey to the river, but also in the repeated dippings was the faith of Naaman put to the test. *like unto the flesh of a little child*] In striking contrast to its former foul and diseased condition, it now became fresher and fairer than was natural in a full-grown man.

15. *And he returned to the man of God*] He was a stranger in Israel, like the Samaritan among the ten lepers whom our Lord cured, but like him he also manifested his thankfulness. *came,*

now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy
16 servant. But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it;*
17 but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor
18 sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth *into* the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself *in* the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself *in* the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy

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and stood before him] His feelings and attitude are alike changed, and so the prophet now shews himself to him. *no God in all the earth, but in Israel*] He has still his notion of different gods assigned to different lands, and does not conceive that Jehovah may be the God of all the earth. *take a blessing* [R.V. **present**] *of thy servant*] Because with a present there generally is given good wishes and benediction, the Hebrews frequently used 'blessing' as here for 'a gift.' **16.** *I will receive none*] Just as in the earlier part of his conduct Elisha had done everything to direct Naaman's attention to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease; so now he will have no gift for himself, lest thereby he should mar the effect of the previous lesson. **17.** *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given*] R.V. **If not, yet I pray thee, let there be given.** Literally the original has, 'And Naaman said, and not' &c. by which is meant 'and if not &c.' i.e. 'if it may not be as I wish, and you will not receive a present, yet &c.' *two mules' burden of earth*] Naaman has no notion of Jehovah but as a territorial deity. He thinks therefore that by carrying with him a quantity of the soil of Israel, he may provide a place for acceptable sacrifice to Him in his country of Syria. It was holy ground and would sanctify all that it came near. *will henceforth offer neither burnt offering*] The other so-called gods are worth nothing. This much he has learnt, and so he will himself pay them no homage. But it would be too hard a thing to expect from so new a convert strength enough to become a witness for Jehovah. **18.** *the Lord pardon thy servant*] Naaman will offer no more sacrifices to Rimmon. But the king his master worships in Rimmon's temple, and Naaman must be in attendance, or he will give offence. He sets his difficulty before Elisha, and Elisha gives him a comforting answer. We must judge both Naaman and the prophet according to the times in which they lived. It was impossible for the former at once to cast away all his old ideas. A new creature is not to be made in a moment out of men like Naaman. Elisha on the other hand had no light such as we have concerning God's message to the heathen; and we need not judge Elisha harshly, because he felt no call to rebuke the half-converted heathen for his imperfect service. *Rimmon*] The god

servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. 19
So he departed from him a little way.

But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 20
Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not
receiving at his hands *that* which he brought: but, *as* the
LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.
So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw 21
him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to
meet him, and said, *Is all* well? And he said, *All is* well. 22
My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be
come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons
of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and
two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take 23
two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of
silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid
them upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before
him. And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from 24

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of the Syrians of Damascus. **19.** *Go in peace*] We are not to consider this answer as implying that service of God and service of Rimmon might be combined without any incongruity. The prophet appears rather to be willing to leave the good seed already sown to bear fruit in due season. *a little way*] The expression literally signifying 'a length of country' is very indefinite. We may estimate its length roughly by considering how far Gehazi could have gone if he had to overtake a mounted cavalcade. It could not be very far.

20. *hath spared Naaman this Syrian*] R.V. **this Naaman the Syrian.** Gehazi had been in attendance on Elisha, and heard the whole conversation. as *the Lord liveth*] How little the words meant for Gehazi we can see, when they come to his lips amid his thoughts of the deceit he is meditating. **21.** *And when Naaman saw* him [R.V. **one**] *running after him*] On an Eastern road the travellers were not numerous, and anyone in hot pursuit would at once be noticed. *he lighted down from the chariot to meet him*] As Gehazi approached, Naaman would recognise him. **22.** *My master hath sent me*] Naaman would naturally rejoice at hearing that circumstances had wrought for an acceptance of the present, which for himself the prophet had refused. *from mount* [R.V. **the hill country of**] *Ephraim*] The Gilgal mentioned in the previous chapter [iv. 38] seems to have been near the hill country of Ephraim. There, we know, there was a college of prophets, and in the neighbourhood may have been others. *a talent of silver*] Though a large sum to ask for as aid to the prophets, it would appear but little to the man who had brought ten times as much with him, in addition to six thousand shekels of gold.

23. *bound two talents of silver in two bags*] The money was put into the bag, and the opening tied up. *laid* them *upon two of his servants*] For the money must have been of considerable weight. **24.** *when he came to the tower*] R.V. **hill.** The word

their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the
25 men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before
his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*,
26 Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And
he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the
man turned *again* from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a
time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-
yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants,
27 and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall
cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went
out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

6 And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now,
2 the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let
us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man
a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.
3 And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray

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is often used in connexion with the description of the wall of Jerusalem. *he took* them *from their hand*] Though they were heavy enough for two men, yet he must contrive to carry them himself that he may attract less notice. **25.** *and stood before his master*] He would let his absence be as little noted as possible.

26. *Went not mine heart* with thee] The verb takes up that which Gehazi had used, 'Thy servant *went* no whither.' Is it *a time to receive money*] The opportunity of Naaman's visit had been used by Elisha to direct the thoughts of the heathen officer to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease. Now Gehazi has done his best to obliterate the impression. In the enumeration of all the grand possessions which the ill-gotten talents were to purchase Elisha shews Gehazi that he has been reading all his thoughts.

27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee*] 'Oh heavy talents of Gehazi,' says Bishop Hall, 'oh the horror of this one unchangeable suit'... *a leper* as white *as snow*] Both here and elsewhere in this phrase, the words 'as white' are inserted to explain the comparison.

VI. **1.** *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha*] There is nothing to indicate which out of the various prophetic communities is here spoken of. But by the proposal which follows, that they should go to the Jordan, and bring from thence each man his beam, we may conclude that the place was not far from the river. *the place where we dwell with* [R.V. **before**] *thee*] The R.V. is correct, and gives more truly the picture of Elisha's relation to these societies. He made visits to the several settlements from time to time. And while he remained, the members were about him as scholars around a teacher. *is too strait for us*] The religious activity of the prophetic schools must have been very great during the life of Elisha, and must also have produced its effect upon the life of the nation. **2.** *take thence every man a beam*] The Jordan valley was well timbered. *make us a place there*] They propose to provide entirely new quarters in a new spot in the valley

thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.
So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they 4
cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head 5
fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master, for
it *was* borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? 6
And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick,
and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore 7
said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and
took it.

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took 8
counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place
shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king 9
of Israel, saying, Beware that *thou* pass not such a place; for
thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel 10

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of the Jordan. **3.** *go with thy servants*] It seems as though they contemplated a removal all at once. In Eastern countries little is thought of camping out in the open country. **4.** *when they came to Jordan*] From what follows we see that they went close to the river. **5.** *a beam*] The Hebrew noun has the article, the force of which may be '*his* beam,' that one to which he was specially devoting himself. *the axe head*] Literally 'the iron.' *it* was *borrowed*] When the whole society were to turn wood-cutters, it was not likely that axes would be in readiness for every one. **6.** *He cut down a stick, and cast* it *in thither*] The account is extremely simple, and does not at all fit with the explanations of those who would represent Elisha as holding the stick and when he had put it into the hole for the handle, thus raising the iron from the bottom. *and the iron did swim*] R.V. **and made the iron to swim.** The stick cast into the river was the outward symbol which the prophet used, as a sign of what was to be miraculously brought to pass. The iron was to float as the piece of wood did. **7.** *Therefore said he*] R.V. **And he said.** *he put out his hand, and took it*] Elisha here wrought, as on previous occasions, for the help of the sons of the prophets. Critics have objected that there is no adequate reason for the exercise of supernatural power, but the loser of the axe was sorely troubled ere he came to Elisha, as his cry 'Alas! master' shews. The whole community would be encouraged, when by this act Elisha made clear to them that they had God's blessing on their new undertaking.

8. *Then* [R.V. **Now**] *the king of Syria warred against Israel*] The inroads described first in this chapter appear to have been made by bands of plunderers, of course with the knowledge and under the direction of the king. But when Benhadad (see verse 24), who probably was the king here alluded to, gathered all his host and came and besieged Samaria the warfare was of a different kind. **9.** *And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel*] As against Syria, the power of Elisha would be most naturally exerted in favour of Israel. *are come* [R.V. **coming**] *down*] They were lying or intending to lie in ambush ready to spring upon and

sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned
11 him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will
12 ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the
13 words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him.
14 And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host:
15 and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas,
16 my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for *they* that *be* with us *are* moe than *they* that *be* with
17 them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of

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capture any that came in their way. **10.** *sent to the place*] A single messenger, against whom the Syrians would do nothing, would be enough to find out whether the prophet's warning were true. *not once nor twice*] i.e. but several times. **11.** *Therefore* [R.V. **And**] *the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled*] Because he saw on all these occasions that the opportunity he had looked for was taken away. **12.** *Elisha, the prophet that* is *in Israel*] This mention of Elisha points to such a knowledge of him as might have been gained through Naaman's cure. **13.** *Go and spy*] R.V. **see.** *that I may send and fetch him*] And thus put an end to the source of information enjoyed by the king of Israel. *Dothan*] Only mentioned in the canonical books of the O.T. here and in the history of Joseph (Gen. xxvii. 17). It was not far from Shechem. It appears from this narrative that Elisha had a residence there. **14.** *a great host*] Greatness is comparative. Here was a company such as could be led by Elisha to Samaria, and fed easily when they reached that city. But no doubt they were formidable when employed for the capture of a single man of peace like Elisha, and they had taken up their position by night. *compassed the city about*] i.e. beset all the gates. **15.** *the servant*] The personal servant. *a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots*] R.V. **an host with horses and chariots was round about the city.** The horses and chariots were in addition to the footmen. **16.** they *that* be *with us*] Elisha speaks as a man whose eyes are opened, and who is sure of Jehovah's protection, whether he beholds the angelic host about him or not. **17.** *open his eyes*] To the servant there was need of a more manifest vision, and for this Elisha prays, and God vouchsafed to grant it, that the servant may become as confident as

the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full *of* horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And 18
when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, 19
neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And 20
it came to pass, when they were come *into* Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. And the king of 21
Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them?* shall I smite *them?* And he answered, Thou 22
shalt not smite *them:* wouldest thou smite *those* whom thou

his master. *the mountain was full* of *horses and chariots of fire*] Just as in chapter ii. 11 we read of appearances so described. The heavenly host was seen encamped about God's servant in such wise as to disperse all fear. *round about Elisha*] The enemy compassed the town all round, but there was an inner circle filled by God's army. **18.** *And when they came down to him*] We must suppose that Elisha and his servant had come forth from the city and been able to pass the gate. After this the Syrians followed them, and on their approach Elisha prayed that they might be smitten with blindness. Some have however thought that 'to him' is an error for 'to them,' and have referred the verb to Elisha and his servant. Thus the sense would be: 'When Elisha and his servant came down to the enemy, as they were emboldened to do, then Elisha prayed &c.' *Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness*] What seems to have been sent upon the men was an illusion which prevented them from seeing correctly what was before them. The word denotes the seeing of something unreal instead of the true image. Thus these men could go with Elisha to Samaria, not knowing to what place he was leading them.

19. *This* is *not the way, neither* is *this the city*] i.e. the way to Elisha, and the city where you shall find him. *I will bring you to the man whom ye seek*] But you shall find him in a place where you shall not be able to arrest him. *But* [R.V. **and**] *he led them to Samaria*] That there he might make himself known unto them. **20.** *open the eyes of these* men] i.e. give them again the true perception of what is round about them. To these Syrian soldiers natural sight was restored, after their eyes had been for a time holden (cf. Luke xxiv. 16) that they might be brought into the power of the king of Israel. God has brought the enemy of His prophet into a snare. *behold* they were *in the midst of Samaria*] Brought where the king of Israel might fall upon them and slay them, had it been permitted. At once they would see that they were prisoners. **21.** *My father*] The form of address is strange from the mouth of the king even though he be described (iii. 2) as better than his father and his mother. **22.** *wouldest thou smite*

hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink,
23 and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.
24 And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged
25 Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a kab of
26 dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman
27 unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, *If* the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of

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those *whom thou hast taken captive*] The prophet points out that the men are not even captives whom the king himself has taken. Had they been so, yet the laws of war would have forbidden their slaughter at such a time and in cold blood. Much more is it unlawful to slay these, who are God's prisoners. *set bread and water before them*] It is manifest that the prophet was setting forth a higher degree of humanity than was usual towards prisoners.

23. *he prepared great provision for them*] We can see from the use of the phrase 'bread and water' in other passages that the words embrace all kinds of food, and hence that Elisha's injunction was equivalent to saying, 'Feed them well, and let them go.' *the bands of Syria*] i.e. these marauding parties, protected by the king of Syria's authority. *came no more*] The generous treatment had its effect.

24. *Ben-hadad*] Probably the same king who was defeated and submitted himself to Ahab (1 Kings xx.). *went up, and besieged Samaria*] Josephus explains that Jehoram shut himself up in Samaria, relying for protection on the security of its walls. **25.** *a great famine in Samaria*] The walls were protection enough, but the provisions came to an end. *an ass's head*] This would not, except in dire extremity, be taken for food. *a kab*] So R.V. The measure is not mentioned elsewhere, but is said to have been the sixth part of a *seah*, which is more frequently spoken of.

dove's dung] Supposed by some to be the name of a very worthless kind of pulse, which in ordinary times nobody dreamt of eating, but of which now a small quantity fetched a large price. That excrement has been used for food in times of famine we have examples (Joseph. *B. J.* v. 13. 7), but that dove's dung should have been specially gathered for this purpose would be very strange.

26. *the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall*] Making the necessary rounds to see that the watch was kept up, and everything done that could be done for the security of the city. **27.** If *the Lord do not help thee*] The R.V. (marg.) attempts to keep the imperative force of the Hebrew thus, 'Nay, let the Lord help thee',

the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said 28
unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman
said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and
we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and 29
did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy
son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And 30
it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman,
that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and
the people looked, and behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon
his flesh. Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if 31
the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him
this day.

But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; 32
and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the mes-
senger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this
son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look,
when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him
fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet behind

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This comes a little nearer the sense of the English versions. But there is no warrant for separating the negative participle in this way from its verb. *out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?*] i.e. with anything to eat or to drink. **28.** *What aileth thee?*] The woman's cry is not stopped by his answer. *This woman said unto me*] It would appear as if she had brought her neighbour along with her, that what she deemed justice might be done her at once. **29.** *she hath hid her son*] So hath famine changed the nature of those whom Jeremiah calls 'the pitiful women.' **30.** *and he passed by upon the wall*] The R.V. places these words in a parenthesis rendering (Now he was passing by upon the wall).

the people looked] At such an appeal many would congregate beside the two persons concerned in the matter. he had *sack-cloth within upon his flesh*] Cf. the action of his father Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 27) when God threatened him with punishment after the murder of Naboth. **31.** *if the head of Elisha.....shall stand on him* this *day*] We must suppose that Elisha had not been wanting in admonitions to both king and people during this terrible siege, and the anger of Jehoram was great because the prophet had done nothing to save the nation in this great calamity.

32. *But Elisha sat in his house*] He is less disturbed than others, having a ground for his trust which they had not found. *and the elders sat with him*] These must be understood to be the chief men of the city, who had come for his advice. *and* the king *sent a man*] One of those who were in waiting to obey his orders and who had heard his threat against Elisha. *he said to the elders*] i.e. Elisha, divinely forewarned of the impending danger, explains to his companions what the king's design against him was. *this son of a murderer*] 'Still is Naboth's blood laid in Jehoram's dish' (Bp Hall). *hold him fast at the door*] R.V. **hold the door fast against him.** Beside knowing of the king's threat, Elisha seems

33 him? And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?
7 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about *this* time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a
2 shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.
3 And there were four leprous men *at* the entering in of the

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to have been aware that he had almost immediately changed his purpose, and was hurrying after the messenger to prevent his order from being executed. Hence he explains to the elders that the king's footsteps are to be heard close upon those of his servant.

33. *while he yet talked with them*] He had hardly explained his knowledge and his wish before action became necessary. The messenger arrived, and we must understand that the king also arrived immediately afterwards, and so the execution of Elisha was stayed, and Jehoram was shewn to be in some degree penitent for his hasty threat. *and he said*] The words which follow must be the words of the king. He had reached Elisha's house and countermanded his first order. Now his thought is of what shall be done next. The people are at the direst extremity, and God gives His prophet no message of relief. In this conviction he is of the mind that Samaria shall be surrendered. Hence his language, 'This evil is of the Lord' and He allows it to continue, 'why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' VII. **1.** *Hear ye the word of the Lord*] Elisha in the name of the Lord gives a solemn assurance that help is nigh. This he does in the presence of the elders who had been sitting with him and of the king's retinue. *a measure of fine flour* be sold *for a shekel*] The measure is the Hebrew *seah*, which is said to be about a peck. So that the change which Elisha foretells would provide six times as much food for one-fifth of the price for which, in the famine, the vilest had been sold. *in the gate of Samaria*] Where people congregated for markets and other purposes. **2.** *Then a lord*] R.V. **the captain.** *on whose hand the king leaned*] By taking the hand of any one by their side royal persons shewed their friendship and confidence. *Behold*, if *the Lord would* [R.V. **should**] *make windows in heaven*] Literally the words are 'Behold the Lord [is] making &c.' This is said in derision. Almost as if the captain had said, 'I suppose then the Lord is going to make &c.' and then he follows his scorn with a question, 'Even then, could [R.V. **might**] this thing be?' *thou shalt see* it *with thine eyes*] The answer to this mocking captain would be as hard for him to comprehend as was the promise of abundance which he was deriding.

3. at *the entering in of the gate*] Lepers were not allowed to

gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter *into* the city, then the famine 4
is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here,
we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the
host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and
if they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the 5
twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they
were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold,
there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of 6
the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses,
even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another,
Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the
Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.
Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their 7
tents, and their horses, and their asses, *even* the camp as it
was, and fled for their life. And when these lepers came to 8
the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and
did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and
raiment, and went and hid *it;* and came again, and entered
into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid
it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day 9

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come into the city even in the time of war. *until we die*] In such a dreadful famine the needs of the outcast lepers could be little regarded. **4.** *let us fall unto the host of the Syrians*] These wrecks of humanity use the language which would be used by hale men who were *deserting* one side for another. **5.** *in the twilight*] This must be evening twilight. *to the uttermost* [R.V. **outermost**] *part of the camp of Syria*] R.V. **the Syrians.** The portion meant is that which was nearest to them. The Hebrew word for Syria is *Aram*, which is used alike for the country and the people. It is rendered 'Syrians' in the first clause of this verse. **6.** *For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise*] As the eyes of the Syrians who came to seize Elisha were deluded, and deceived, so here the other sense is made to err. *hath hired against us*] Instances of such mercenary service are found elsewhere in the Bible narrative. *the kings of the Hittites*] In the Bible we first meet with the Hittites as one among several nations whose land God promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen xv. 20) and often afterwards the nation is mentioned. Yet in profane literature this people, evidently very wide-extended and powerful, are unnoticed, and it is only the modern deciphering of the records of Egypt and Babylon which has given us a conception of the Hittite power. *and the kings of the Egyptians*] Large districts of Egypt, called by the Greeks, *nomes*, were under distinct organization though owning allegiance to the Pharaoh. **8.** *they went into one tent, and did eat and drink*] Hunger asserted the first claim; that satisfied, they began to think how they might make most gain for themselves, till their consciences smote them for their selfishness. **9.** *We do not well*] Although

is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, *some* mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.
10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but
11 horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. And he called the porters; and they told *it to* the king's house within.
12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the
13 city. And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are even* as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let

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by the law of Moses these lepers were excluded from the city, they yet had in their degree the duties of citizens to perform, and in neglecting to give tidings of the Syrian flight, they were not acting the citizen's part. some *mischief will come upon us*] R.V. **punishment will overtake us.** It could hardly fail to be found out in the morning at what time the lepers had made their discovery, and when it became known they would surely be punished for not giving immediate information. *the king's household*] The men themselves would go no further than the gate, but the warders on the wall would carry the news, as soon as they received it, to the royal palace. **10.** *called unto the porter*] i.e. from the outside of the wall, whither alone they were allowed to come.

but horses [R.V. **the horses**] *tied, and asses* [R.V. **the asses**] *tied*] The baggage cattle, and the beasts for riding stood tethered in their places, fear having permitted no attempt to unloose them.

the tents as they were] Everything had been forsaken just as it stood. **11.** *And he called*] i.e. the one who was nearest and received the news did so. *and they told* it to *the king's house* [R.V. **household**] *within*] We are to understand that one of the number of the watchmen was detached to convey the news. They would not all leave their posts.

12. *the king arose in the night*] The news was so important that the messengers went with it to the king's bedchamber, and he at once arose to take measures for investigating it. *what the Syrians have done to us*] i.e. with the hope of entrapping us.

13. *five of the horses*] 'Five' is probably used indefinitely to mean some small number. *behold, they* are *as all the multitude*] The sense of the speaker seems to be: the men sent out as spies, if they be taken and slain, will be no worse off than those that remain behind, for these are consumed with famine and will soon be dead.

us send and see. They took therefore two chariot horses; 14
and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go
and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and lo, all 15
the way *was* full *of* garments and vessels, which the Syrians
had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned,
and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the 16
tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for
a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to
the word of the LORD.

And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned 17
to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon
him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said,
who spake when the king came down to him. And it came 18
to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying,
Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine
flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about *this* time in the
gate of Samaria: and *that* lord answered the man of God, 19
and said, Now behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in
heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou
shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so 20

And if they find the news true they are enough to make sure of the matter, and to bring word into the city. **14.** *two chariot horses*] R.V. **two chariots with horses.** Each chariot had its pair of horses, so that there were four horses, and probably two or three people in each chariot. If anything happened to one chariot, the other might come to the rescue, or, at all events, have a chance of escaping to the city. *after the host of the Syrians*] The spies were not content with searching the camp. They went on the way where scattered property of all kinds shewed that the Syrians had taken their flight. **15.** *unto Jordan*] The only safe road would be to make for the Jordan eastward and, after crossing it, to conceal themselves in the mountains on the other side. *the messengers returned*] After the Jordan had been reached there could be no more doubt. **16.** *the people went out*] When the camp had been found empty, word was at once sent back into Samaria, while a portion of the exploring party advanced on the road to the Jordan. The whole population were encouraged by the news, and went out, as they were likely to do after being so long pent up, in full numbers. There was food to be had, and beside that, rich plunder.

17. *the king appointed the lord*] R.V. **captain.** The captain was told off to restrain the impetuosity of the crowd. *as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him*] Jehoram himself came down to Elisha's house after he had sent his messenger. Hence Elisha says, 'Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?' (the messenger). And we can then understand the question in the following verse, which is intelligible in the mouth of the king, but could hardly have been spoken by

it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

8 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon
2 the land seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.
3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.
4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great *things* that
5 Elisha hath done. And it came to pass, *as* he was telling the king how he had restored a dead *body* to life, that behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha

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the messenger. **20.** *the people trode upon him*] The excitement was no doubt intense. The crowd had been in the camp, had eaten and drunk abundantly, and were carrying home spoils, and probably thinking how soon they could return for another load.

VIII. **1.** *Then spake Elisha*] R.V. **Now Elisha had spoken.** It is clear from verse 3 that Elisha's advice was given at least seven years before the event narrated in these verses. *the woman, whose son he had restored*] i.e. the Shunammite whose story is told in iv. 8—37. *sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn*] Why such advice should be given to a woman, who from the history appears to have been in better circumstances than others, it is not easy to decide. As the husband is nowhere mentioned in this appeal to Jehoram, it may be that he, being already old when the son was restored to life, had in the meantime died. Then she may have fallen into some distress, and have been unable to dwell on the lands which her husband had cultivated. *and it shall also come*] Elisha, as the seer, foretells the duration of the dearth, as he had done the termination of the siege, and the consequent abundance in Samaria (vii. 1). **2.** *sojourned in the land of the Philistines*] The pious Shunammite, for her life's support, goes forth among the Philistines, and stays there seven years. **3.** *she went forth to cry unto the king*] She had reached Shunem, and found her land in other hands. **4.** *the king talked* [R.V. **was talking**] *with Gehazi*] For a brief conference we find Naaman though a leper coming to the court of Israel and obtaining an interview with the king or some of those in immediate attendance on him. So if Jehoram were desirous to know everything about Elisha, he might for a short time converse with Gehazi. **5.** *had restored a dead* body *to life*] R.V. **to life him that was dead.** This would be among the greatest of the great works of Elisha, and

restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now. 6

And Elisha came *to* Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even *of* every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until *he* was ashamed: and the man of God wept. 7 8 9 10 11

Jehoram's interest would consequently be at its height. **6.** *she told him*] i.e. confirmed the narrative which Gehazi had given. *Restore all that* was *hers*] It would seem from this as if the king himself had been put in possession of the land.

7. *And Elisha came* to *Damascus*] Probably here 'Damascus' is used not for the city, but for the district. *The man of God is come hither*] Ben-hadad had experienced in many ways the power of the God of Israel, and though Rimmon was the god of Damascus, yet, in common with other idolaters, the king thinks that it may be possible for him, through the prophet, to obtain help from the Israelites' God. **8.** *the king said unto Hazael*] Josephus says Hazael was the most trusted of Ben-hadad's household. *in thine hand*] The Oriental notion of sending a present is to make it seem as grand as possible, by committing each portion to a separate servant, or placing it on a separate beast of burden. *inquire of the Lord*] It was with the hope that for such a gorgeous present the prophet might intercede with the God of Israel for his recovery. **9.** *even* of *every good thing of Damascus*] Cf. the present which Jacob sent by his sons when they were going down into Egypt to buy food (Gen. xliii. 11). *forty camels' burden*] The number of camels was for display. *stood before him*] It must have been well known where Elisha was to be found. There was no concealment in his visit. An array of forty camels would only be brought to a definite spot. *Thy son Ben-hadad*] The term indicates the humility of the petitioner. **10.** *Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly* [R.V. **shalt surely**] *recover*] The meaning of the prophet's words is, 'Go and carry him such a message as a courtier is likely to carry, a message of good promise, for this I know you are likely to do, yet the Lord has made known to me that he will die.' **11.** *And he settled his countenance stedfastly*] The R.V. adds 'upon him' in italics. This no doubt is the sense. Elisha fixed a stedfast gaze on the messenger. *until*

12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered,
Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children
of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their
young *men* wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their
13 children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael
said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this
great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed
14 me *that* thou *shalt be* king over Syria. So he departed from
Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said
Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that* thou
15 shouldest surely recover. And it came to pass on the mor-
row, that he took a thick cloth, and dipt *it* in water, and
spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in
his stead.

16 And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of
Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the
17 son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah *began* to reign. Thirty and

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he *was ashamed*] i.e. until Hazael blushed with embarrassment at the searching look. **12.** *and wilt dash their children*] R.V. **and wilt dash in pieces their little ones.** We have no details of Hazael's cruelty in the future, but hints of it are found. Cf. x. 32; xiii. 3. The special instances of cruelty mentioned in this verse were those perpetrated among all the Eastern nations of Hazael's time. **13.** *And Hazael said, But what,* is *thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?*] R.V. **And Hazael said, But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?** Hazael has felt the keenness of the prophet's glance, and finds that his thoughts are known, and his inmost designs laid bare. But still he keeps up a semblance of humility and calls himself a dog, a title of greatest contempt in the eyes of Orientals. **14.** *So* [R.V. **Then**] *he departed from Elisha*] The last words of the prophet had shewn him that his whole aim was clear in Elisha's sight, and his character thoroughly read. **15.** *on the morrow*] He would not tarry. The means he employed was probably the coverlet of the bed, which, soaked and laid over the sick man's face, would effectually stop his breath. The noun rendered 'thick cloth' [R.V. **the coverlet**] is only found here, but it is connected with a verb which signifies 'to weave.'

16. *in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab*] See above on i. 17. On the strength of the words in this verse 'Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah' it is supposed that Jehoram king of Judah was co-regent with his father. But, as is noted on the margin of R.V., some ancient authorities omit the sentence which makes father and son to be reigning together. The chief difficulty is introduced by the words of i. 17, which make Joram the son of Ahab commence his reign in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat of Judah. That statement contradicts the present verse, and the explanation given on i. 17 though generally accepted

two years old was he when he *began* to reign; and he reigned
eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the 18
kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of
Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.
Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's 19
sake, as he promised him to give to him alway a light, *and*
to his children. In his days Edom revolted from under the 20
hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. So Joram 21
went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he
rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him
about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled
into their tents. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of 22
Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same

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gives rise to many questions. Especially it is objected that in no other instance is a son found reigning along with his father.

18. *as did the house of Ahab*] Jehoshaphat's friendship and alliance with Ahab's house brought the ways of Israel into the kingdom of Judah. *the daughter of Ahab*] i.e. Athaliah, who, after the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings xi. 1), slew all the seed royal of Judah, with the exception of Joash, Ahaziah's son. **19.** *Yet* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the Lord would not destroy*] As in Chronicles. *as he promised to give him alway a light, and to his children*] R.V. **as he promised him to give unto him a lamp for his children alway.** For the promise to David and his seed see 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, and for the expression 'to give him a lamp' see 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4. **20.** *Edom revolted*] In Solomon's time Hadad (1 Kings xi. 14) recovered the kingdom of Edom, which had been overthrown by David (2 Sam. viii. 14). But by the time of Jehoshaphat the Edomites were again subject to Judah (1 Kings xxii. 47) and appear to have continued so until the time of the revolution here mentioned. *made a king over themselves*] i.e. They deposed the deputy of Judah and made one of their own royal family king. **21.** *So Joram went* [R.V. **Then Joram passed**] *over to Zair*] The name Zair is only found here. *and he rose* [R.V. inserts **up**] *by night and smote the Edomites which compassed him about*] Joram appears to have been surrounded by the Edomite forces, and for some time to have had the worst of the contest. It was only by a sudden sally in the night time that he forced his way out and escaped. *and the people fled into* [R.V. **to**] *their tents*] 'The people' are the army of Joram, which after escaping from their encircling enemy made the best of their way home. **22.** *Yet* [R.V. **so**] *Edom revolted*] As the army of Joram was defeated the Edomites secured their independence, and that continued till the date of the record from which the compiler of the Kings drew his information. So he copies faithfully 'unto this day.' *Then Libnah revolted*] R.V. **did Libnah revolt.** Libnah was situate in the lowland between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean coast. It was a strong city with a king when the Israelites took it under Joshua (Josh. x. 29—39). It is mentioned afterwards (2 Kings xix. 8) as besieged by

23 time. And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he
did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the
24 kings of Judah? And Joram slept with his fathers, and was
buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his
son reigned in his stead.

25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of
Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah *begin*
26 to reign. Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he
began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And
his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king
27 of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab,
and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of
28 Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab. And
he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against
Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians
29 wounded Joram. And king Joram went back to be healed
in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him
at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria.

Sennacherib. **23.** *the rest of the acts of Joram*] In Chronicles we are told of the high places which he made in the mountains of Judah, and how he compelled the people to worship there. In consequence of this a writing is said to have come to him from Elijah the prophet rebuking him for his evil-doing, and telling of the painful disease by which he should die. We read there also of revolts against Joram by the Philistines and the Arabians, and that by the latter all the king's family were cut off except his youngest son. Moreover that when he died the people made no burning for him, as had been done at the death of his ancestors, and that 'he departed without being desired,' i.e. none missed him or lamented for him when he died. Also that though buried in the city of David, his body was not put into the sepulchres of the kings.

25. *Joram...Jehoram*] To prevent confusion it will be convenient to adopt the orthography of this verse for these names, Joram king of Israel and Jehoram king of Judah. **26.** *Two and twenty years old* was *Ahaziah*] In 2 Chron. xxii. 2 his age is given as *forty-two*. This cannot be correct, but is due to a misreading of the Hebrew letters which were used as numerals.

Athaliah, the daughter of Omri] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and so the grand-daughter of Omri. **27.** *he walked in the way of the house of Ahab*] The Chronicler adds 'for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.' *and did evil*] R.V. **that which was evil.** **28.** *to war against Hazael*] Hazael was already beginning to fulfil the forecast of Elisha. Ramoth-gilead belonged to Israel (1 Kings xxii. 3) but now, as in Ahab's reign, it was being seized by the Syrians. **29.** *And king Joram went back* [R.V. **returned**] *to be healed in Jezreel*] Jezreel was one of the capital cities of the northern kingdom, where was a royal palace, and where all attendance could be procured.

Ramah] This is put for Ramoth-gilead, both here and in the

And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the 9
prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go *to* Ramoth-gilead: and 2
when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him *to* an inner chamber: then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, 3
and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. So the 4
young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went *to* Ramoth-gilead. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host 5
were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he 6

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parallel passage in Chronicles, but nowhere else. *Ahaziah... went down to see Joram*] After the battle Ahaziah at first returned, probably with his portion of the allied army, to Jerusalem. But the friendship between the two royal houses was so close that he presently went northward to Jezreel to pay a visit to his wounded ally and kinsman.

IX. **1.** *And Elisha the prophet called one of the children* [R.V. **sons**] *of the prophets*] The prophetic communities were formed of men who came together for worship, and were not necessarily connected in any family relationship, any more than Elisha was connected with Elijah. *Gird up thy loins*] The moment had come for executing God's vengeance on the house of Ahab, and the work is to be done without delay. *take this box* [R.V. **vial**] *of oil*] 'Vial' is the rendering of this word in A.V. of 1 Sam. x. 1 and is a more appropriate word when used for an oil vessel. to *Ramoth-gilead*] Here Jehu and his fellow officers had apparently been left in charge, while Joram went away to Jezreel. **2.** *Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi*] Jehu was no doubt well-known both in the army and elsewhere, and his after-life shews that he was a man of action and with very slight scruples. *and go in*] We see from this that the troops and officers of Israel were within the city, and holding it against the Syrians. *from among his brethren*] i.e. His fellow officers. to *an inner chamber*] Literally 'a chamber within a chamber.' The design of this privacy was no doubt that Jehu might be at liberty to take his own measures for carrying out his commission, without the interference of any but comrades of his own choice. **3.** *flee, and tarry not*] The suddenness of the messenger's arrival and departure would be sure to produce a deep impression on those who observed him.

5. *the captains of the host* were *sitting*] Perhaps discussing some matter connected with the defence of the city. **6.** *went into the house*] The council was sitting in the courtyard, a place which

poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the
7 people of the LORD, *even* over Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants
8 of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab *him that* pisseth against the wall, and *him that is* shut up and left in
9 Israel: and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the
10 son of Ahijah: and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*. And he opened the door, and fled.
11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is all* well? wherefore came this mad *fellow* to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his

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in Eastern houses can be kept somewhat private. *over the people of the Lord*, even *over Israel*] Abundance of prophetic labour was expended in Israel and they were still the people of the Lord.

7. *thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master*] The punishment of Ahab had been postponed because of his repentance (1 Kings xxi. 29) but the sins of the father will at last be thoroughly punished. *my servants, the prophets*] Although Obadiah was able to save a hundred, Jezebel still made havoc of the rest. *at the hand of Jezebel*] i.e. God will require from her and her family the penalty for all the evil that has been wrought. **8.** See notes on 1 Kings xiv. 10. God will cut off from Ahab **every man child.** (R.V.) *and* him that is *shut up and left in Israel*] R.V. **him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.** The phrase is intended to embrace everyone, young or old, bond or free. **9.** *like the house of Jeroboam*] Against whom the like prophecy is spoken in 1 Kings xiv. 10, and against Baasha in 1 Kings xvi. 3, 4. **10.** *the dogs shall eat Jezebel*] This fate had been foretold by Elijah, 1 Kings xxi. 23. The dogs in Eastern cities prowl hungrily about, and act as scavengers. *in the portion of Jezreel*] In 1 Kings xxi. 23 the word used signifies 'wall' (R.V. **rampart**). 'By the rampart' indicates that she should lie just where she was thrown down. The 'portion' signifies the ground a little more outlying, which in an Eastern town is used for the deposit of all offal and rubbish. *and* there shall be *none to bury her*] One moment she will be queen, the next, cast out of the window by the eunuchs, and her lot so changed that none shall care to go and see what becomes of her body.

11. *to the servants of his lord*] i.e. To the other captains. They were all Joram's officers. *wherefore came this mad* fellow *to thee?*] The visit had been made abruptly and in much haste.

Ye know the man] No doubt this means, 'Ye know to what class the man belongs, and so you can guess at the nature of his communication.' Such a man in such haste comes only with a

communication. And they said, *It is* false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. So Jehu rode *in a chariot*, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of

12 13 14 15 16

message 'Thus saith the Lord'. R.V. in the latter clause of the sentence, **and what his talk was.** **12.** It is *false*] They make Jehu understand that his answer is a mere subterfuge.

Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee] It is worthy of notice how constantly the people of the northern kingdom attach the highest importance to the messages of God's prophets, and act upon them without demur. Jehu and his companions at the voice of the prophet are prepared to dethrone the house of Ahab and put Jehu in his place. **13.** *Then they hasted*] This action on the part of the generals shews how little they were attached to the house of Ahab. *took every man his garment*] The loose Oriental robe which could easily be laid aside. *and put* it *under him*] They made a seat for Jehu by folding their garments, and piling them together. They extemporised a cushion with their robes.

on the top of the stairs] The prominent part of the staircase is meant by this expression. For the purpose here desired, the best possible place was that where Jehu would be set above the people. *blew with trumpets*] Cf. 1 Kings i. 34. **14.** *conspired against Joram*] The verb has the notion of 'binding.' Hence it implies here that Jehu made a league with the other generals to carry out the deposition and slaying of Joram. *Now Joram had kept* [R.V. omits *had*] *Ramoth-gilead*] The reference is to the existing state of the war. The army of Israel was in Ramoth, to protect the place against the threatened invasion of the Syrians. *he and all Israel*] Meaning the greater part of the army, all the soldiery which could come into the field. **15.** *But king Joram was returned*] Though he was at Jezreel professedly for the cure of his wounds, Joram was sufficiently recovered to be able to entertain Ahaziah, and also to go forth in his chariot to meet Jehu. *If it be your minds*] R.V. **If this be your mind.** Jehu, as was fit until his throne was secure, takes counsel with his fellow-generals. *let none go forth* nor *escape*] R.V. **let none escape and go forth.** To secure this must be their care. Jehu himself with a faithful few will start at once to execute the judgement which has been laid upon him. His best chance of success is to take Joram by surprise. **16.** *And Ahaziah king of Judah*

17 Judah was come down to see Joram. And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and
18 let him say, *Is it* peace? So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger
19 came to them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent *out* a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu answered, What hast
20 thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of
21 Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the
22 portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it* peace, Jehu? And he an-

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was come down to see Joram] This visit of Ahaziah to Joram and its fatal result is the only portion of the history alluded to by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxii. 7—9). **17.** *And there stood a watchman*] R.V. **Now the watchman stood.** While such danger was threatening one part of the land, and the army was in the field, the watchman would be kept permanently on the look-out for any messenger that might be seen coming. Is it *peace?*] There would be much anxiety in the king's mind, though he would not expect what was coming. **18.** *What hast thou to do with peace?*] What concern is it of thine whether I come peaceably or not? My errand is not to thee. The design of Jehu's order was that no information should be brought to Joram. **20.** *the driving is like the driving of Jehu*] It is clear from this that Jehu was well known, and the manner in which he would lead forward his men was unmistakeable. *the son of Nimshi*] Really 'grandson,' see verse 2, and the note on chapter viii. 28. *he driveth furiously*] The word rendered 'furiously' is from the same root as that rendered 'mad' in verse 11. Josephus says 'Jehu journeyed leisurely and in good order.' The Chaldee and Arabic also explain it by 'quietly.' **21.** *Make ready*] The mention of Jehu has shewn Joram that the reason must be a weighty one which brings the commander of the army from Ramoth at full speed. So he goes to meet him that he may know what has happened. Apparently he set forth without any body-guard, and thus is easily put to flight when Jehu attacks him. *went out against Jehu*] R.V. **to meet Jehu.** There is not necessarily an adverse sense in the word, and the kings had no suspicion of what Jehu's real errand was. *in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite*] This was 'hard by the palace' (1 Kings xxi. 1) so that the royal

swered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so* many? And Joram turned 23
his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is* treachery, O Ahaziah. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and 24
smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. Then said *Jehu* 25
to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; surely I have seen yesterday the 26
blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD.

But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled *by* 27
the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him,

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chariots had not gone far before they came upon Jehu. **22.** *What peace*] i.e. How can there be any peace, while the evil doings of Jezebel continue as great as before. By 'whoredoms' the Scripture writers continually signify 'the practice of idolatry' and that is probably the sense here. **23.** *Joram turned his hands*] i.e. wheeled his chariot about to go in a contrary direction. **24.** *between his arms*] As he was in flight, the arrow passed between his shoulders and so went through the breast. He was mortally wounded and could not be stayed up in his chariot, but died at once. **25.** *rode together after Ahab his father*] Jehu had long experience of the doings of Ahab's family, and had not forgotten the prophetic words of Elijah. By 'riding together after Ahab' we are to understand that they were together among the king's retinue, when he went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. *laid this burden upon him*] Or (as R.V. margin) 'uttered this oracle against him'. **26.** *the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons*] It appears from this that Jezebel in order that she might put all claimants out of the way, had caused the family of Naboth to be killed as well as himself. So Ahab's son pays the penalty of his father's wrongdoing. *I will requite thee in this plat*] Jehu gives the sense but not the words of 1 Kings xxi. 19. *take* and *cast him*] i.e. Lift his dead body out of the chariot and carry it and throw it forth into the ground which was taken from Naboth.

27. by *the way of the garden house*] The events took place close to the royal grounds, for Naboth's vineyard lay in the neighbourhood. The garden house may have been some building at the extremity of the domain by which flight from the scene of destruction appeared easy to Ahaziah. *And Jehu followed after him*] i.e. in the person of his partizans and followers, to whom he gave the order 'Smite him also.' Jehu wished to get into Jezreel as soon as possible, and left the fate of the king of Judah to others.

and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at
the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled *to*
28 Megiddo, and died there. And his servants carried him *in*
a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre
29 with his fathers in the city of David. And in the eleventh
year of Joram the son of Ahab *began* Ahaziah to reign over
Judah.
30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it;*
and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out
31 at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said,
32 *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lift up his

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Smite him also in the chariot] In the original the command continues 'at the going up to Gur' (R.V. at the ascent of Gur), as though Jehu knowing the country specified to his men the place where they would be most likely to overtake Ahaziah, where the ground began to rise, and so would retard his flight. This seeming somewhat unnatural, the A.V. inserted 'And they did so', the R.V. 'and they smote him'. Neither Gur nor Ibleam have been identified. *And he fled* to *Megiddo*] Megiddo was on the southern extremity of the plain of Esdraelon, and by its position was a place of much strategical importance. It was a place of importance in the days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 12), for he made it one of his commissariat stations. At a later period it was the scene of Josiah's death (2 Kings xxiii. 29), when he had taken part with Assyria against Pharaoh-necoh, king of Egypt. *and died there*] It was part of Jehu's commission to have Ahaziah slain, for he was Ahab's grandson. **28.** *his servants carried him* in a chariot *to Jerusalem*] Jehu had no wish to deprive the kin of Ahab of regal burial after they were slain. **29.** *And in the eleventh year of Joram*...began *Ahaziah to reign*] This verse seems out of place. It is not usual to mention the date at which a king begins to reign after his death, but at his succession.

30. *when Jehu was come to Jezreel*] Very little time could have elapsed between the slaying of Joram and the advance from Naboth's vineyard to the palace. But the news of what Jehu had done had already been brought to Jezebel, for she knows that he has murdered the king her son. *and she painted her face*] R.V. **eyes.** The process is common still in the East. The preparation used is made from antimony, which gives when applied to the eyelashes and eyebrows a dark outline, as a setting to the eyes. *and tired her head*] Putting on some ornamental insignia of royalty. *and looked out at a window*] The building in which she was formed part of the city wall, and the gateway by which the city was entered was close by. So the window may have been in some lofty part. **31.** *at the gate*] Of Jezreel. Because it was the custom for the king to sit in the gate to hear causes and complaints brought to him for judgement. Had *Zimri peace, who slew his master?*] R.V. **Is it peace, thou Zimri, thy master's murderer?** Jezebel could not expect peace from Jehu. For Zimri's slaughter of Elah, and his seven

face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs. And he said, 33
Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat 34
and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's daughter. And they went to bury 35
her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands. Wherefore they came 36
again, and told him. And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the 37
face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; *so* that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote **10**
letters, and sent *to* Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the

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days' reign, cf. 1 Kings xvi. 9—20. With a like short tenure of power, and the same fate, Jezebel would threaten Jehu.

32. *two* or *three eunuchs*] In all languages the omission of connecting particles between numerals is common. **33.** *So they threw her down*] It is easy to understand how such an imperious mistress would have few friends among her servants. With Eastern fickleness they at once take the side which seems victorious. some *of her blood*] The fall was from such a height as to kill her, and apparently she was torn and bruised as she descended. *and he trode her under foot*] i.e. drove his horses and chariot over her fallen body. **34.** *And when he was come in*] To the palace, where now he was master. *and said, Go, see now this cursed* woman] [R.V. **And he said, See now to this cursed woman**] By 'cursed' he means that she has brought God's curse upon herself by her idolatry and bad example. *she* is *a king's daughter*] Jezebel was daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. **35.** *they went to bury her*] While Jehu was refreshing himself in the palace, the dogs gathered about the dead body of Jezebel and devoured it. **36.** *This* is *the word of the Lord*] In one point after another he finds the curse fulfilled. Now it is Joram's death in Naboth's vineyard, and now the dogs devouring Jezebel.

X. **1.** *in Samaria*] It would seem that the name here is for the whole *district*, as some of those slain appear to have been in Jezreel. *sent* to *Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel*] There is a difficulty here. We cannot see why the rulers of Jezreel should be in Samaria, or why the great men in Israel should have been named 'rulers of Jezreel.' Hence some have suggested that for 'Jezreel' we should read 'Israel.' *and to* [R.V. **unto**] *them that brought up Ahab's* children] [R.V. the sons of **Ahab**] Of course it was only for the 'sons' of the royal family that this provision of tutors was made, because out of them would come the

elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's *children*, saying,
2 Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's
sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses,
3 a fenced city also, and armour; look even out the best and
meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's
4 throne, and fight for your master's house. But they were
exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not
5 before him: how then shall we stand? And *he* that *was*
over the house, and *he* that *was* over the city, the elders also,
and the bringers up *of the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, We
are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we
will not make any king: do thou *that* which *is* good in thine
6 eyes. Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying,
If ye *be* mine, and *if* ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye
the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to
Jezreel by to morrow *this* time. Now the king's sons, *being*
seventy persons, *were* with the great *men* of the city, which
7 brought them up. And it came to pass, when the letter came

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successor to the throne. **2.** *Now* [R.V. **And now**] *as soon as this letter cometh to you*] Only an extract from the letter is here given. *a fenced city*] This must refer to the city of Samaria, which probably was better fortified than Jezreel. **3.** *look even* [R.V. **look ye**] *out the best*] No doubt in the popular mind some prince had been marked out as heir to the throne, and some order of succession may have been indicated by Ahab himself, if his elder sons died without issue, but at such a juncture he would be chosen who would rally to him most assistance. Jehu sends his message like one perfectly confident in the effect it will produce.

4. *Behold, two kings stood not before him*] Jehu's prompt action had prevented any details of what had been done from reaching Samaria. **5.** *And* he *that* was *over the house*] R.V. **household**. This was an official personage, the chief of the royal personal officers. *the bringers up* of [R.V. **they that brought up**] the children] Thus the word is translated in the same manner in both verses. *and will do all that thou shalt bid us*] We may be sure that these men knew, when they tendered their service to Jehu, the sort of work he would wish them to undertake.

we will not make any king] R.V. **any man king**. The noun is expressed in the original, and makes the profession of submission somewhat more emphatic. **6.** *a letter the second time*] Before he presents himself to them, he will let their alarm involve them more deeply than he is involved in the destruction of the royal family. *take ye the heads*] So David smote off the head of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 54) and brought it with him from the battle-field. *come to me to Jezreel*] From what follows we should not discover that they obeyed this part of the order. But no doubt they did, and were ready at the gate, when Jehu came forth on the morrow. *Now the king's sons*, &c.] This sentence is inserted to shew how easy it was for the tutors to slay the whole family at a

to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel. And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them *in* two heaps *at* the entering in of the gate until the morning. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these? Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great *men*, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until *he* left him none remaining.

And he arose and departed, and came *to* Samaria. *And* as

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blow. **7.** *and slew seventy persons*] R.V. **and slew them, even seventy persons.** *sent him* them *to Jezreel*] R.V. **sent them unto him.** Before they come themselves, they take care that the price, by which they expect to purchase Jehu's favour, shall be paid down. **8.** *Lay ye them* in *two heaps*] Josephus here says 'one on one side and the other on the other.' No doubt the place was chosen as one of most public resort, and where Jehu meant to come forth as their new king and take his seat next day.

until the morning] They had arrived in the evening of the day when they were cut off. **9.** *he went out, and stood*] At the gate, the place of concourse, where the people usually gathered. Jehu in this way began to play the king. *Ye* be *righteous*] He is about to make an appeal to the people. He therefore puts them first of all in a good frame of mind towards himself. He admits at once that he is 'the murderer of his master,' but before them they see the heads of the whole of Ahab's sons, slain by the rulers of Samaria. 'Who smote all these?' he asks, feeling confident that his act will fade into insignificance before the enormity of their greater butchery. And he was not disappointed.

10. *Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord*] Thus Jehu constitutes himself, in the eyes of the people, the instrument by which the Lord is to avenge the evil doings of the house of Ahab. He also leads them to expect that there is more vengeance yet in store. **11.** *and his kinsfolks*] R.V. **familiar friends.** The word indicates those who were well known to him, and contains no notion of kinship. *and his priests*] On this word, which is most frequently rendered 'priests,' see note on 1 Kings iv. 2, where it is pointed out that 'chief ruler' or 'principal officer' appears sometimes to be its meaning.

12. *And he arose and departed, and came* [R.V. **went** to *Samaria*] Jehu is now starting for Samaria. On the way and before he *came* thither he met Jehonadab, and invited him to be

13 he *was at* the shearing house in the way, Jehu met with the
brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye?
And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we
go down to salute the children of the king and the children
14 of the queen. And he said, Take them alive. And they took
them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house,
15 *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them. And
when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the
son of Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he saluted him, and
said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy
heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me*
thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him
16 up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me,
and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in

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his companion. *the shearing house*] R.V. **the shearing-house of the shepherds**. The original is a more full expression here than in verse 14 below. So the additional words are needed. There was probably close by some place suited for travellers to halt in, as it clearly lay along a high road. Thus we can understand how Jehu found the cavalcade of Ahab's kindred stopping there. **13.** *the brethren of Ahaziah*] And so part of Ahab's kinsfolk, of whom Jehu was commissioned to leave none remaining. *the children of the king*] i.e. of Joram. They manifestly knew nothing of what had happened in the last few days in Jezreel. *the children of the queen*] The original is the word employed elsewhere for the 'queen-mother.' **14.** *Take them alive*] i.e. Make them prisoners. Perhaps for a moment he was uncertain what he should do with them. *And they took them alive*] The 'pit' (R.V. margin, **cistern**) was the great pond or pool in which the sheep were washed before shearing. **15.** *Jehonadab the son of Rechab*] We are told (1 Chron. ii. 55) that the house of Rechab belonged to the Kenites. The marriage of Moses to a Kenite wife (Judg. i. 16) led to the Kenites going up with the children of Judah into the wilderness, and so they came to dwell among the people of Israel. Of Jehonadab (the name is also written *Jonadab*) we learn (Jer. xxxv. 6—7) that he forbade his descendants to drink wine, or to live in cities, and follow settled occupations. They were always to lead a nomad life; we find too that this ordinance of Jonadab had been observed down to the days of Jeremiah. It is clear therefore that he must have been a man of much influence. We see also that Jonadab was thoroughly at one with Jehu in the destruction of Baal-worship. We may therefore count his kinsmen as among the more faithful portion of the people of Israel. *into the chariot*] For a great personage to cause another to ride with him in his chariot was a mark of distinction. Cf. 1 Kings xx. 33. It is noteworthy that Jehu appears to have attached much importance to Jonadab's support and sympathy. He must therefore have considered that the people of Samaria would be influenced thereby. **16.** *see my zeal for the Lord*] This was the boast of a man who did not know his own

his chariot. And when he came *to* Samaria, he slew all 17
that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till *he* had destroyed
him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to
Elijah.

And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto 18
them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him
much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, 19
all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for
I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be
wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtilty, to
the intent that *he* might destroy the worshippers of Baal.
And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And 20
they proclaimed *it*. And Jehu sent through all Israel: and 21
all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a
man left that came not. And they came *into* the house of
Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to an-

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heart. He had some zeal and manifested it in the destruction of Baal, but stopped short at the suppression of the calves in Dan and Beth-el. **17.** *all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria*] i.e. Others more remotely connected with the royal family than the direct descendants. The great men in Samaria having slain the sons of Ahab, must be content to side with their new ruler in clearing off all that remained of his connexions, otherwise vengeance might awake against themselves. *according to the saying* [R.V. **word** *of the Lord*] This is the more usual expression, but R.V. has left '*saying* of the Lord' in 1 Kings xv. 29.

18. *Ahab served Baal a little*] We may judge from the ready acceptance of the announcement in this verse, that Jehu had been no different from the rest, and had gone in the way where Ahab and Jezebel led. **19.** *all his servants*] R.V. **worshippers,** as the same word is so translated at the close of this verse, and again in 21, 22, and 23. *all his priests*] These were not the same as the prophets. The latter gave oracles to inquirers and taught the mysteries of the worship, the priests attended on the numerous sacrifices. **20.** *Proclaim* [R.V. **Sanctify**] *a solemn assembly*] The verb is not the same which is correctly rendered 'they proclaimed' in the next clause. *a solemn assembly*] The word is used of the solemn gatherings of God's people for their sacred worship. Jehu by using such a term seems to be putting Baal entirely on a level with Jehovah. **21.** *not a man left that came not*] They had been largely encouraged in previous reigns, but now they were to be elevated above all others. *the house of Baal*] 'House' is the constant word for 'temple' in the Old Testament, and no doubt this building was as magnificent as the architectural skill of Tyrian workmen, and the zeal of the house of Ahab, with whom architecture seems to have been a passion, could make it. *from one end to another*] The Hebrew phrase is 'from mouth to mouth,' i.e. 'from one entrance to the

22 other. And he said unto *him* that *was* over the vestry,
Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And
23 he brought them forth vestments. And Jehu went, and Je-
honadab the son of Rechab, *into* the house of Baal, and said
unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be
here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the
24 worshippers of Baal only. And when they went in to offer
sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men
without, and said, *If* any of the men whom I *have* brought
into your hands escape, *he that letteth him go*, his life *shall be*
25 for the life of him. And it came to pass, as soon as he had
made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said
to the guard and to the captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let
none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the
sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and
26 went to the city of the house of Baal. And they brought

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other.' Almost the same phrase is used Ezra ix. 11, of a land filled 'from one end to the other.' **22.** *he said unto* him *that* was *over the vestry*] The vestry must have belonged to the house of Baal; we cannot suppose that the king's wardrobe-keeper had a stock of robes to supply such a multitude of worshippers. **23.** *Search, and look*, &c.] Not only did he manifest anxiety that all the Baal-worshippers should be present, but that none of the rest of the people should be included in the destruction. **24.** *And when they went in*] R.V. omits 'when,' and makes this clause an independent sentence. *Jehu appointed*] In consequence of what has been done in the previous clause, R.V. renders '**Now** Jehu **had** appointed,' and adds **him**=for himself, after 'appointed.'

If *any of the men whom I* have *brought*] R.V. **I bring**. The sentence is very elliptical, as will be seen from the italics of A.V.

25. *as soon as he had made an end of offering*] That is, when the priests had completed the offering. *Jehu said to the guard*] The 'guard' is that body of 'runners' which appears in the history as soon as a king was appointed, and which played a part in all state parade. *cast* them *out*] There is no pronoun expressed in the Hebrew. And it is not easy to see why the dead bodies should have been cast out of a place which they wished to be thoroughly defiled. Hence it has been thought that the 'casting' here spoken of refers only to the throwing aside the dead to make their way through the courts towards the central portion of the building. *and went to the city of the house of Baal*] The word rendered 'city' is applied to smaller enclosures than we usually understand by it now, and seems here to indicate some principal part of the temple edifice. **26.** *And they brought forth the images*] R.V. **pillars.** On this word see above, iii. 2 note. As the worship of Astarte was combined with that of Baal, we can understand that in such a splendid temple as that which Ahab and Jezebel had erected, there would be more pillars (or sacred obelisks) than one, though one would be specially known as

forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burnt them.
And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the 27
house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto *this* day.
Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit *from* the 28
sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, 29
Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves
that *were in* Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan. And the LORD 30
said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that*
which *is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of
Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children
of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.
But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God 31
of Israel with all his heart: *for* he departed not from the sins
of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and 32
Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; from Jordan 33
eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reu-

'the pillar of Baal.' *and burnt them*] So that these more numerous pillars must have been of wood. Probably they were of less size than the chief obelisk. **27.** *they brake down the image of Baal*] As the verb is the same as that used immediately afterwards for the breaking down of the house, we may be almost certain that this chief object of worship was of stone. The verb is constantly employed of pulling down buildings. *a draught house*] The word 'draught' is found again in Matth. xv. 17; Mark xii. 19. *unto* this *day*] See above on viii. 22. For the commands in the Law to destroy the objects of heathen worship cf. Deut. vii. 5, 25, xii. 2, 3. **28.** *Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel*] The false worship had not taken such root in the land that it could ever revive again. **29.** *golden calves that* were] From 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, we see that only *one* image was in each place. **30.** *Because thou hast done well*] i.e. To a certain extent. The partial obedience of Jehu obtains the gift of a succession for four generations. *thy children* [R.V. **sons**] *of the fourth* generation] For the fulfilment see chap. xv. 12.

31. *with all his heart*] He only went partially on the right way, and probably personal ambition had much to do with his zeal against Baal. With the calves it was another matter. They formed, as it were, the emblems of Israel's independence, and so the king's feeling would be enlisted on their side.

32. *to cut Israel short*] Literally 'to cut off *in* Israel.' The meaning is 'to give over some parts of their land into the enemy's hand.' *in all the coasts of Israel*] In the days when the A.V. was made, 'coast' meant 'any border land' and had no necessary relation to the sea. The 'coasts' described in the next verse are all on the east of Jordan, and entirely away from the Mediterranean.

33. *Gilead*] This country lay between Bashan on the north, and Moab and Ammon on the south. It was of a mountainous character, and was chosen by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and

benites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the
34 river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. Now the rest of the
acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they
not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
35 Israel? And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried
him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.
36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was*
twenty and eight years.

11 And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son
2 was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. But
Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah,

Manasseh because it was so well adapted for the pasturage of their numerous flocks. *Aroer*] This city was on the south boundary of the tribe of Reuben, which was the southernmost of the three trans-Jordanic tribes. *Arnon*] This torrent bed, full of water in the rainy season, but dry in summer, after the character of all the clefts in the east of Jordan, is wrongly described by 'river' of A.V. *Bashan*] This district, which like Gilead was mountainous, lay between Gilead and Mt Hermon. **34.** *the acts of Jehu*] Jehu is one of the kings of whom we learn something from the cuneiform inscriptions. There we are told that he was the ally of Assyria. Hence he was the enemy of Hazael, who was frequently at war with the Assyrians. To Assyria Jehu appears to have been a tributary ally, for his tribute is twice mentioned in the records of Salmanasar II. It is noteworthy that in both places he is spoken of as Jehu *the son of Omri*. The family of Omri, from their magnificence, must have exercised a great influence among the neighbouring powers, and their name would thus be employed to designate the family on the throne of Israel without regard to whether they were descendants of Omri or not. *and all his might*] Though Jehu's reign marks the commencement of the decay of Israel, and is specially noteworthy for the loss of territory, yet Jehu himself appears to have made his mark as a warrior.

35. *Jehoahaz his son*] We are told (chap. xiii. 1) that Jehu's death, and the accession of Jehoahaz, was in the three and twentieth year of Joash, king of Judah. As Jehu reigned twenty-eight years he must have been on the throne about *five* or *six* years when Joash was made king. In chapter xii. 1 the accession of Joash is placed in the *seventh* year of Jehu, but from the way in which the Jews reckoned the regnal years of their kings there need be no contradiction between these statements.

XI. **1.** *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when Athaliah*] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and became the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. *she arose and destroyed*] The verb here rendered 'arose' is often joined with another verb to give the notion of 'setting earnestly about' any business. *all the seed royal*] i.e. all those that remained after the destruction wrought by Jehu on the brethren of Ahaziah (see above x. 14). **2.** *But Jehosheba*] Called in 2 Chron. xxii. 11 Jehoshabeath. She was only half sister

took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stale him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid *in* the house of the 3
LORD six years. And Athaliah *did* reign over the land.

And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fet the rulers over 4
hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him *into* the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with

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to Ahaziah, and not the daughter of Athaliah. *took Joash*] He must have been a mere babe at the time, not a year old. Cf. *vv.* 3 and 21. *and stale him from among the king's sons which* [R.V. **that**] *were slain*] R.V. reads the rest of the sentence thus **even him and his nurse**, *and put them* **in the bed chamber, and they hid him from Athaliah, so**, &c. *the bedchamber*] A chamber where beds were stowed away. **3.** *And he was with her*] i.e. with his nurse, who continued to tend him after he had grown somewhat older. in *the house of the Lord*] We learn from the description of Solomon's Temple (see note on 1 Kings vi. 5) that it was surrounded on two sides and one end with three stories of chambers. It is not said to what use they were put, but we may safely conclude that they were under the control of the high-priest, and that, for such a purpose as is here described, he would have no scruple about using them, even if on ordinary occasions no one dwelt in them. *six years*] Perhaps Athaliah was not aware that any one of the royal children had been saved. She gave order for their destruction, and her agents did all they could to carry out her design.

4. *And the* [R.V. **in the**] *seventh year*] Jehoiada's name is introduced very abruptly and without any specification of his office till we come to verse 9. This points to an early date for the document from which the compiler of Kings made his extracts. It is only when the events are somewhat recent that the names of important actors in them can be introduced without some description. *fet the rulers* [R.V. **captains**] *over hundreds*] The change in R.V. makes the passage conform to Deut. i. 15 where the various subdivisions of the officers are mentioned. *with the captains and the guard*] R.V. **of the Carites and of the guard.** Here both nouns are in a construction which shews that the captains over hundreds belonged to both the classes of men here mentioned. Hence, as the word rendered 'guard' is literally 'runners' and applies to the royal body-guard, so the 'Carites' are thought to be a similar class. The word only occurs in this chapter verses 4 and 19 and in 2 Sam. xx. 23. As in that passage the Carites, or Cherethites, and Pelethites formed David's guard, so at this time there appear to have been similar body-guards attached to the palace in Jerusalem. into *the house of the Lord*] We can see from such passages as Jer. xxxv. 2, where the prophet is bidden to bring the Rechabites 'into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers' that the rooms by which the Temple was surrounded were used for meetings such as the one here described.

them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD,
5 and shewed them the king's son. And he commanded them,
saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third *part* of
you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the
6 watch of the king's house; and a third *part shall be* at the
gate of Sur; and a third *part* at the gate behind the guard:
so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken
7 down. And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath,
even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about

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and made a covenant with them] In 2 Chronicles we are told how these officers were first employed: 'They went about in Judah and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah and the chief of the fathers of Israel (R.V. **heads of fathers'** *houses* **in Israel**), and they came to Jerusalem. Jehoiada sent them to the persons with whom, by reason of his office, he would have the greatest influence, but the operations were ultimately to be under the command of the captains of the guard. **5.** *And he commanded them*] The two things to be provided for are the safety of the young king's person and the guarding of the royal palace. These duties Jehoiada deputes to the five captains whom he had taken into his confidence. Three bodies of men are to watch the palace at different points, while two other bodies are to be in charge of the house of the Lord about the king. *a third* part *of you that enter* [R.V. **come**] *in on the sabbath*] Those who are to take part in the work that is planned are to be the guards who enter on their duty on the Sabbath, and those who are going off duty. As the words are addressed to the captains over hundreds the 'of you' must apply to the soldiers under their command. But it is perfectly intelligible that a somewhat similar arrangement of the Levites might also be made, and that they should take their part in the work of restoring the king. We note from Chronicles that the occasion of some feast was arranged as the time for carrying out the plan. For it is said that 'all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord.' *shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house*] R.V. omits 'even.' No doubt they would be stationed so as to prevent anyone from the palace coming forth, without their consent, to interfere with the proceedings at the Temple. **6.** *at the gate of Sur*] R.V. omits 'of.' This gate is nowhere else named. *at the gate behind the guard*] The guard here spoken of are the 'runners' who formed a part of the royal body-guard. Nothing is more likely than that such a body would have special quarters assigned to them in the neighbourhood of the palace, and if they were at this time thought to be favourable to Athaliah, the necessity would be apparent of putting a body of well-affected men close to them to keep them in check. *so shall ye keep the watch of the house*] The 'house' is the palace, which was thus to be strongly guarded at three places. *that it be not broken down*] R.V. **and be a barrier**. The word is a noun in apposition with 'watch' and defines its character. **7.** *And two parts of all you that go forth*] R.V. **And the two companies**

the king. And ye shall compass the king round about, every 8
man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh with-
in the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as
he goeth out and as he cometh in. And the captains over 9
the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the
priest commanded: and they took every man his men that
were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go
out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. And to 10
the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's

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of you, even all that go forth. All those men who were going off duty at the palace were to divide themselves into two bodies, and go and serve at the Temple to protect the king. The 'of you' refers to the purely military body, as in verse 5. We see in verse 11 that their duty was outside the Temple building, while the narrative in Chronicles in almost identical language appoints the Levites for duty within the Temple. **8.** *And ye shall compass the king round about*] Though the pronoun is changed, the same persons are intended. *he that cometh within the ranges*] R.V. **ranks.** This is the point where the distinction is most marked between the duties to be discharged by the soldiers and by the Levites. From 2 Chron. xxiii. 7 we find that the Levites were to form a guard for the king's person within the Temple, while the soldiers discharged the same office in the court, and when he was conducted from the Temple to the palace. So the one body is bidden to take summary vengeance on any intruder within the sacred building, the other on any who should break through their ranks to get within the enclosure. *as* [R.V. **when**] *he goeth out and as* [R.V. **when**] *he cometh in*] **9.** *and the captains over the* [R.V. omits **the**] *hundreds did according to all* things] R.V. omits **things**, for which there is nothing in the original. The Levites must have been in some degree at least under the control of these centurions. *that Jehoiada the priest commanded*] He was the prime mover, and both the Levitical and military guards acted together to carry out his design. *with them* [R.V. **those**] *that should go out*] So both sets of men were engaged; and in the case of the Levites it is said in 2 Chron. xxiii. 8, 'For Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses,' i.e. did not allow those members of the Levitical courses, whose term of service was then ended, to go away, as on other occasions they were free to do. **10.** *And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give*] R.V. **And the priest delivered to the captains over hundreds.** Thus the English is made to correspond to the Hebrew order more closely, and to the translation in 2 Chron. It is to be observed that both accounts agree about the weapons being delivered to the soldiery by Jehoiada. *king David's spears and shields*] R.V. **the spears and shields that had been king David's.** This is the form in 2 Chronicles, except that there 'bucklers' are mentioned between 'spears' and 'shields.' For the practice of devoting the weapons of the conquered cf. the sword of Goliath laid up in store with Ahimelech at

11 spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD. And
the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand,
round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to
the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the
12 temple. And he brought forth the king's son, and put the
crown upon him, and *gave him* the Testimony; and they
made him king, and anointed him; and they clapt their
13 hands, and said, God save the king. And when Athaliah
heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to
14 the people *into* the temple of the LORD. And when she

Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 9), and the shields which David took from the servants of Hadadezer (2 Sam. xiii. 7) and carried to Jerusalem.

that were *in the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] It is the same word which is rendered 'house' frequently in this chapter.

11. *And the guard stood*] These are the 'runners,' the foot-soldiers, whose duty was on the outside of the Temple. *round about the king*, &c.] Better, **from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.** To understand how these guards were ranged it must be remembered that the altar stood in the court in front of the Temple porch. Hence from each corner of the porch, on the right and left, the men were ranged in lines between the Temple and the altar, so that when the king came forth he could advance between them, and the lines gradually came towards each other as they neared the altar. The space enclosed by them would be somewhat triangular in form, the base being the width of the Temple porch. Into this space Joash was brought forth, and there proclaimed and anointed in the sight of the people.

12. *And he brought forth the king's son*] i.e. Jehoiada did so, who had charge of him. *and* gave him *the Testimony*] The word so rendered occurs first in Exod. xvi. 34, where it is directed that the pot of manna is to be laid up before the *Testimony*. That by this is meant some portion of the Law which was given to Moses is made clear in a later passage. In Exod. xxv. 16, 21 it is described as 'the *Testimony* which I shall give thee.' *and anointed him*] This was not done as far as we know with all kings, but the present was a special occasion, and no part of the ordinance would be omitted which could help to mark in a religious manner the restoration of the true scion of David's house.

and they clapt their hands] A natural expression of approval and applause, though not frequently spoken of in the O. Test.

God save the king] Literally 'Let the king live.' **13.** *And when Athaliah heard the noise*] The arrangements had all been made so cautiously that the queen-mother had no knowledge of what was being done. But we may suppose that ere long the report would reach her through her attendants, and so she went toward the house of the Lord. *of the guard* and *of the people*] There is no conjunction in the Hebrew, and the guard were the 'runners' spoken of above. *she came to the people* into *the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] The assembly was a notable

looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason. But 15
Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain *in* the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she 16
went *by* the way by the which the horses came *into* the king's house: and there was she slain.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the 17

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one and seems to have been at the time of some feast which had brought a more than usually great concourse to Jerusalem.

14. *And when she looked, behold, the king*] Better, with R.V. **And she looked, and, behold the king.** *stood by a* [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] By this word is clearly designated some spot which was the special position of the king on such occasions. We see that Athaliah took in the whole scene at a glance and knew without telling what was going on. The situation of the pillar is described in 2 Chron. xxiii. 13 as 'at the entering in,' words which would not unfitly describe the position of the two pillars erected in the Temple porch. *as the manner* was] Hence it was a well-known spot appropriated to such occasions. *and the princes and the trumpeters*] R.V. **the captains and the trumpets.** The 'captains' were those 'over hundreds' mentioned before. 'Trumpets' of course implies 'trumpeters,' but the word is literally translated in 2 Chron., and the two places should agree. *and all the people of the land rejoiced*] Shewing that there was a numerous convocation. *and* [R.V. **then**] *Athaliah rent her clothes*] Seeing with horror that priests and soldiery and the assembled people were all against her. **15.** *But* [R.V. **And**] *Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the* [R.V. omits *the*] *hundreds, the officers of the host*] R.V. **that were set over the host.** The changes bring the version into close agreement with 2 Chron.

Have her forth without the ranges] R.V. **between the ranks.** The object of Jehoiada's order is plain. He would keep Athaliah surrounded by his own guards, but get her removed beyond the precincts of the Temple. *and him that followeth her kill* [R.V. **slay**] *with the sword*] The persons who might perhaps be expected to follow her, when she was led away guarded from the Temple, would be those of her own attendants. **16.** *And they laid hands on her*] R.V. **So they made way for her.** Literally the words mean, 'they arranged for her two sides,' thus making a space between which she could walk. by *the way by the which the horses came* into *the king's house*] R.V. **by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house.** The way here spoken of was a private road to the king's house. *there was she slain*] No doubt according to the orders of Jehoiada.

17. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord*] Of course

king and the people, that *they* should be the LORD'S people;
18 between the king also and the people. And all the people of the land went *into* the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces throughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest
19 appointed officers over the house of the LORD. And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came *by* the way of the gate of the guard *to* the king's house. And he sat on the
20 throne of the kings. And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the
21 sword *beside* the king's house. Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he *began* to reign.

12 In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash *began* to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
2 *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba. And Jehoash did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days where*in* Jehoiada

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in the whole transaction Jehoiada would appear as a representative of Jehovah, and receive in the name of the Lord the promise of both king and people. *between the king also and the people*] i.e. that they should be loyal subjects and he a just ruler over them. **18.** *went* into [R.V. **to**] *the house of Baal*] Athaliah had set up Baal worship in Judah after the fashion of the northern kingdom. *brake they in pieces throughly*] That there should be no chance of a restoration. *Mattan the priest of Baal*] We read of no other priest of Baal in Judah, and so we may conclude that though the court favoured idolatry, it found no great favour with the rest of the kingdom. *And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord*] From this necessity we may gather that the regular ministrations in the Temple had been interfered with by the introduction of the Baalim. Cf. 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19.

19. *And he took the rulers* [R.V. **captains**] *and the captains*] R.V. **the Carites.** On these words cf. above on verse 4. *and they brought down the king*] The movement was a popular one, the people taking part with the soldiers and the priests. The temple was on a lofty height. Hence the phrase 'brought down'.

by *the way of the gate of the guard* to [R.V. **unto**] *the king's house*] This gate would be specially ready for the king's entry, as it was one of those secured by the arrangements described in verse 6. **20.** *And* [R.V. **So**] *all the people of the land rejoiced*] The attachment of Judah to the family of David had always been very great. *and the city was in quiet*] R.V. omits *in*, as is done in the parallel verse in 2 Chron. beside [R.V. **at**] *the king's house*] There is no preposition in the original as the italics of A.V. indicate; the noun is an accusative of place. **21.** *Seven years old* was *Jehoash*] R.V. **Jehoash was seven years old.** This is the arrangement of the words in 2 Chron.

XII. **2.** *all his days*] In the original there is a division here in

the priest instructed him. But the high places were not taken 3
away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high
places. And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the 4
dedicated *things* that is brought *into* the house of the LORD,
even the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the
money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that
cometh into any man's heart to bring *into* the house of the
LORD, let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his ac- 5
quaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house,
wheresoever any breach shall be found. But it was *so, that* in 6
the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had

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the verse, and the pronoun which both A.V. and R.V. render 'wherein' should, as the text stands, be translated 'because.' This statement that Jehoash did what was right *all his days* is opposed to the narrative in Chronicles. **3.** *But* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the high places were not taken away*] Worship having been permitted there before the Temple was erected, it was difficult to draw the people away from them, as they would be near at hand and would also have acquired a degree of consecration from long use. **4.** *And Jehoash said to the priests*] Even if we had not the definite statement which stands 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 of the depredations made on the Temple by the sons of Athaliah, we can understand how under her rule the Temple would be neglected and allowed to get out of repair. Hence the need which Jehoash recognised. *All the money of the dedicated* [R.V. **hallowed**] things] The money here spoken of is that which was given for the provision of vessels and implements for Temple-service. even *the money of every one that passeth* the account] R.V. **in current money**. The R.V. is supported by the rendering of A.V. in Gen. xxiii. 16. We are not however to understand by 'current,' money that was coined, which neither in Abraham's time nor in Joash's was in use among the Jews. They employed pieces of silver of varying weight, and the weighing was the mode of estimating its value. *the money that every man is set at*] R.V. **the money of the persons for whom each man is rated.** The literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'each man the money of the souls of his estimation.' *the money that cometh* [R.V. **that it cometh**] *into any man's heart to bring*] These were freewill offerings, cf. Lev. xxii. 18—23; Deut. xvi. 10. **5.** *let the priests take* it *to them, every man of his acquaintance*] This passage is not easy to understand until we have along with it the parallel account of the Chronicler. In 2 Chron. we are told that the priests and Levites were bidden 'to go out unto the cities of Judah and gather money of all Israel.' Hence nothing was more natural than that each should go among the people to whom he was best known, and from whom he would have the best chance of bringing in contributions. *and let them repair*] R.V. **they shall repair**. The wish of the king at first was to put the whole matter in the charge of the priest. *the breaches*] Years of neglect had allowed the walls of the Temple to crumble and crack. **6.** *In the three and*

7 not repaired the breaches of the house. Then king Jehoash
called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said
unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now
therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but
8 deliver it for the breaches of the house. And the priests
consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither
9 to repair the breaches of the house. But Jehoiada the priest
took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside
the altar, on the right side as one cometh *into* the house of the
LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the
10 money that was brought *into* the house of the LORD. And it
was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the
chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and

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twentieth year of king Jehoash] By which time he must have attained the age of thirty and was able to act with decision. *the priests had not repaired the breaches*] We are not told why this was so, though the king asked the question. They had evidently been receiving the money, for the king's order in the next verse is 'Take no more money'. **7.** *Why repair ye not the breaches?*] No answer is given to this question either here or in 2 Chronicles. There can be no doubt that with the decay of the house of the Lord, the decrease of the offerings had also taken place. *now therefore receive* [R.V. **take**] *no* more *money*] The collection which had at first been ordered (2 Chron. xxiv. 5) was now to cease. **8.** *the priests consented to receive no* more *money...neither to repair*] R.V. **that they should take no more money...neither repair**. They had clearly found the work beyond them, and were glad to be relieved both of the collection and the laying out of the fund. **9.** *But Jehoiada the priest took a chest*] The Chronicler says 'At the king's commandment they made a chest'. It is manifest that both king and priests were at one in changing the plan for raising a repair-fund. *set it beside the altar*] In Chronicles it is said to have been set 'without at the gate of the house of the Lord.' *all the money that was brought*] In 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, 10 we are told that when the chest was set 'they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.' While the money had been given by individuals at their homes, and with no united action, the preparations had languished. The new arrangement put life into the work. **10.** *when they saw that* there was *much money in the chest*] They could tell this by lifting. *the king's scribe*] This was the royal secretary, through whom the king would be kept acquainted with the progress of the fund. *the high priest*] The Chronicler says 'the high priest's officer.' *came up*] To the place whither the chest had been brought for examination and to be emptied. *put up* in bags] The literal meaning 'bound up' is given on the margins of

they put up *in bags,* and told the money that was found *in* the house of the LORD. And they gave the money, being told, into 11
the hands of *them* that did the work, that had the oversight *of* the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, and to 12
masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair *it.* Howbeit there 13
were not made *for* the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought *into* the house of the LORD: but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired there- 14
with the house of the LORD. Moreover they reckoned not with 15
the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully. The trespass 16

A.V. and R.V. *and told the money*] i.e. as we should now say 'counted' it. The old use of 'tell' for 'count' occurs several times in the O.T. Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 4 'He *telleth* the number of the stars.' **11.** *they gave the money, being told*] [R.V. **that was weighed out.** Here by employing a different word the writer makes plain what was meant by the previous 'telling' or 'counting.' *into the hands of* them *that did the work*] Explained by the following clause as 'the overseers,' the chief men who had charge of the restoration. *and they laid* [R.V. **paid**] *it out to the carpenters and* [R.V. **and the**] *builders*] Both nouns are defined, as are also '**the** masons and **the** hewers of stone' in the next verse. **12.** *and to buy timber and hewed stone*] R.V. **and for buying timber and hewn stone.** The whole passage thus becomes, as the Hebrew makes it, dependent on the previous verb 'they paid it out,' so that the overseers are represented as paying all wages and buying all materials. **13.** *Howbeit* [R.V. **But**] *there were not made* for *the house of the Lord*] The compiler of Kings makes mention of certain vessels and implements which *were not made* at this time and from these contributions. The Chronicler, on the contrary, notices those *which were made.*

bowls [R.V. **cups**] *of silver*] An attempt has been made in R.V. to give the same renderings to the same words in the enumeration of vessels for the Temple. **14.** *but* [R.V. **for**] *they gave that to the workmen*] R.V. **to them that did the work.** The Hebrew expression is the same as in verse 11, and signifies the overseers, not the craftsmen. **15.** *the men into whose hand they delivered*] This must refer to certain treasurers into whose care each new chest-full of offerings was entrusted. *to be bestowed on workmen*] R.V. **to give to them that did the work.** The same expression as in verses 11 and 14. **16.** *The trespass money*] R.V. **The money for the guilt offerings.** 'Guilt offering' was adopted by R.V. in Lev. v. 1—6 and throughout the law for the 'trespass-offering' of A.V., to accord with the verb and the adjective which are rendered in that leading passage 'to be guilty' and 'guilty.'

money and sin money was not brought *into* the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

17 Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to
18 Jerusalem. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed *things* that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicate, and his own hallowed *things*, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and *in* the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.
19 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?
20 And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew
21 Joash *in* the house of Millo, which goeth down *to* Silla. For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they

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'Trespass money' occurs nowhere else but in this verse. *sin money*] R.V. **the money for the sin-offering.** On this see Lev. v. 7—12. 'Sin money' is found nowhere else. *it was the priests'*] See Lev. xiv. 13. 'For as the sin-offering is the priest's, so is the trespass (R.V. **guilt**) offering.'

17. *Hazael*] See chap. viii. 8. *fought against Gath*] Gath was one of the five great cities of the Philistines. It lay almost directly west between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean.

18. *hallowed* things] See above on verse 4. *kings of Judah had dedicate*] No doubt there were occasions in almost every reign when the king was able to give from his conquests some gift as a thank-offering to God for success. Hence the sacred treasures would come to be of great value. *and he went away from Jerusalem*] Since Hazael is not mentioned by the Chronicler as present in this expedition, and the spoils are described as being sent away to him, we may conclude that what he is here said to have done was done by the hosts of Syria which he sent forth. In Chronicles, though nothing is said there about the way in which Jehoash bribed the Syrians to depart, we learn that for some reason or other they did depart without prosecuting the siege of Jerusalem.

19. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Joash*] Here and in the next verse the shorter form of the king's name is introduced.

20. *And his servants arose*] The Chronicler tells us that the Syrians left the king suffering from 'great diseases,' perhaps from wounds received in some battle against the Syrians. *slew Joash* in *the house of Millo*] R.V. **smote Joash at** &c. We see from 2 Chronicles that the king was lying sick at this place. So it probably was some royal residence, or some part thereof. On 'Millo,' the name of some part of the fortifications of Jerusalem, cf. 1 Kings ix. 15. *which goeth down* to *Silla*] R.V. on the way **that goeth down to Silla.** **21.** *For Jozachar*] [R.V. **Jozacar**] *the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer*] *and they buried him with his fathers*] i.e. in the city of David, but as the Chronicler records, not in the sepulchres of the kings. The

buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

13 In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu *began* to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. 2 And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. 3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. 4 And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from

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words of the Chronicler about the 'greatness of the burdens' laid upon Jehoash refers to the many prophetic oracles which were uttered against him in consequence of his evil deeds. Cf. for that sense of the word 'burden' Is. xiii. 1, and many other passages of that prophet. *and Amaziah his son*] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxiv. 27) speaks of the '*sons* of Jehoash'; we know nothing however of any son but Amaziah, though it is said (2 Chron. xxiv. 3) 'Jehoiada took for Jehoash two wives, and he begat sons and daughters.'

XIII. **1.** *In the three and twentieth year of Joash...king of Judah, Jehoahaz*...began *to reign*] The chronology here seems inconsistent with verse 10. See Chronological Table in the Introduction. *Jehoahaz the son of Jehu*] The first of the four generations for which God promised that the line of Jehu should continue. **2.** *which made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made**, &c. As usual. The same change is needed below in verses 6 and 11 of this chapter. What the writer here wishes to represent is that in spite of the calamities which befel the nation from Hazael in the previous reign, the son was no better than his father, and so 'the Lord's anger was kindled;' He sent severer punishments on those whom His warnings had not moved, and Hazael not only inflicted blows on the power of Israel, but made them still more subject to him. **3.** *all* their *days*] R.V. **continually.** It must refer to the whole of this reign. **4.** *Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him*] But the intervention of Jehovah is postponed to another generation. The Syrians are allowed to oppress Israel all the days of Jehoahaz, though we are told that his prayer had been heard. In the days of Jehoash, the next successor, some alleviation was afforded, but it was not, as it seems, till the following generation that the full answer to the prayer came. **5.** *And the Lord gave Israel a saviour*] The '*saviour*' alludes to what is said of Jeroboam II. (xiv. 27). 'The Lord *saved* Israel by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.' This was the time when the prayer of Jehoahaz was truly answered, in the reign of his grandson. *so they that went out from under the hand of the Syrians*] Language like this must refer to some

under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel
6 dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. Nevertheless they de-
parted not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made
Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove
7 also in Samaria.) Neither did he leave *of* the people to
Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thou-
sand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and
8 had made them like the dust by threshing. Now the rest
of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might,
are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings
9 of Israel? And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they
buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his
stead.

10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah *began*
Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria,
11 *and reigned* sixteen years. And he did *that* which *was* evil in
the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of
Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he
12 walked therein. And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all

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very great change in the relative positions of Syria and Israel. We have some indication of it in the statement (xiv. 28) that Jeroboam recovered Damascus for Israel. By such a reverse the power of Syria must have been severely broken. *the children of Israel dwelt in their tents*] The expression may refer to the peaceful state when the dwellers in the country could live safely out amid their flocks and crops. But 'tents' is sometimes used for 'homes.' Hence the words of this verse may mean only that the people lived quietly at home, and were not constantly called forth to resist the inroads of the Syrians. **6.** *and there remained the grove* [R.V. **Asherah**] *also in Samaria*] See note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. Jehu had not eliminated all that belonged to the Tyrian idolatry, and his successors were no more earnest to do so than himself.

7. *Neither did he leave* of *the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen*] R.V. **For he left not to Jehoahaz of the people save fifty horsemen.** Not only does R.V. render the original here more exactly, but it indicates clearly where the parenthesis of the last two verses comes to an end. We have here the continuation of verse 4, and a picture of the character and extent of the Syrian oppression. *the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them*] The R.V. omits '**had**' in both places. This is right, for the description refers to the time of Jehoahaz. *like the dust by threshing*] R.V. **in threshing**. The correct sense is given on the margin of R.V. 'dust to trample on.' The Oriental manner of threshing is by the trampling of oxen's feet, and the figure is used to signify the utter prostration of Israel.

10. *In the thirty and seventh year of Joash*] See above on verse 1. *Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz*] As in the case of Jehoash king of Judah (see xii. 2, 19, 20) so here the longer form, in the previous verse the shorter form, of this name is written.

that he did, and his might where*with* he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joash slept with 13
his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. 14
And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And Elisha said unto him, 15
Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.
And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the 16
bow. And he put his hand *upon it:* and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window east- 17
ward. And he opened *it.* Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the

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12. *his might where*with *he fought against Amaziah king of Judah*] The story of Amaziah's challenge to Jehoash is told in xiv. 8—14 and in 2 Chron. xxv. **13.** *and Jeroboam sat upon his throne*] i.e. Jeroboam the second, who was the third generation of the family of Jehu. This form of words concerning a royal succession is unusual. *with the kings of Israel*] Though Samaria was only built by Omri, Ahab's father, yet by this time it had become the favourite city and the burial-place of the royal family.

14. *and wept over his face*] R.V. **over him.** 'Face' in Hebrew is constantly used for 'a person,' and it seems more suitable to omit the very literal rendering here. It is manifest from this history that though Jehoash continued the worship of the calves, the worship of Jehovah can have met with no opposition from him, and Jehovah's prophet was held in the highest esteem. *O my father, my father*] R.V. omits '*O*', which A.V. does not give in the corresponding passage ii. 12. Elisha's help had been so often given to Israel against their enemies, that the words seem to apply even better to him than to Elijah. *the chariot* [R.V. **chariots**] *of Israel*] The word is meant to embrace the whole mounted host, the chariotry of the land. **15.** *Take bow and arrows*] The prophet by this significant action directed and encouraged the king to enter on the war against Syria. **16.** *and Elisha put* [R.V. **laid**] *his hands upon the king's hands*] It will be seen from the marginal rendering of A.V. that the two verbs, both translated 'put,' are not the same. **17.** *And he said, Open the window*] That there might be a free space for the arrow to be shot through. The command must have been directed to some attendant, as the king was holding the bow ready to shoot when he was bidden.

eastward] Because eastward from Samaria lay the land of Gilead, at this time in the hands of Syria. *The arrow of the Lord's deliverance*] R.V. **The Lord's arrow of victory.** The R.V. represents more exactly the force of the Hebrew, which describes this arrow of victory as belonging to the Lord. *and the arrow of deliverance from Syria*] R.V. **even the arrow of victory**

18 Syrians in Aphek, till *thou* have consumed *them*. And he said,
Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the
king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice,
19 and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and
said, *Thou* shouldest have smitten five or six times; then
hadst thou smitten Syria till *thou* hadst consumed *it:* whereas
20 now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice. And Elisha died, and
they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the
21 land *at* the coming in of the year. And it came to pass,
as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band *of*
men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and
when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha,
he revived, and stood up on his feet.

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over Syria. The sentence is in apposition with the previous clause. *in Aphek*] This is probably the place of that name which was on the east of the sea of Galilee. *till* thou *have consumed* them] This was the prophet's thought and the purport of his message. The lack of zeal in Jehoash diminished the completeness of the victory which God had promised. **18.** *Take the arrows*] The prophet now proceeds to test the zeal of the king. *Smite upon the ground*] The Hebrew indicates the *direction* of the blows 'towards the ground.' It appears as though the prophet wished the blows to be aimed as if to strike down a foe. *And he smote thrice, and stayed*] On 'stayed' in this sense of 'ceased' cf. on iv. 6 above. The act, which was intended to be an index of his earnestness, is very feebly performed, and so the promise is curtailed: 'now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.'

19. *the man of God was wroth*] We must think of sorrow as well as anger. **20.** *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the bands of the Moabites invaded the land*] If Elisha died in Samaria, and was buried in that neighbourhood, we must suppose Moab to have made great inroads upon Israel if the bands of plunderers could advance close to the royal city. at *the coming in of the year*] There was a season of the year at which alone it was usual, and perhaps, on account of the climate, possible, for an army to take the field.

21. *as they were burying a man*] i.e. Some Israelites had brought a dead body to the burial-place on a bier, without a coffin. *behold, they spied a band* of men] The band was a band of marauding Moabites, at whose approach the Israelites were terrified. *into the sepulchre of Elisha*] This must have been nearer at hand than the grave which they intended to use. *and when the man was let down, and touched*] R.V. **and as soon as the man touched.** It will be seen from the margin of R.V. that the Hebrew means 'and when the man went and touched'. This does not warrant the English of A.V. *the bones of Elisha*] We need not press the literal sense of 'bones', as though a long time had elapsed since Elisha died. *he revived, and stood up on his feet*] The record of this miracle seems intended to set forth that it was nothing in the prophet himself which had given him the great powers he

But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of 22
Jehoahaz. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had 23
compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of
his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not
destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.
So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned 24
in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out 25
of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which
he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war.
Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of
Israel.

In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel **14**
reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was twenty 2
and five years old when he *began* to reign, and reigned twenty and
nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoad-
dan of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which *was* right in the 3
sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did
according to all *things* as Joash his father did. Howbeit the 4

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manifested in his lifetime. Through his dead body God could work a miracle also.

22. *But* [R. V. **And**] *Hazael...oppressed Israel*] In these four verses we have a recapitulation of the attitude of Syria toward the Israelites in the two reigns of Jehoahaz and his son. The oppression lasted all the days of the former king, but yet, as in answer to his prayer (verse 4), Israel was not allowed to be destroyed. In the next reign came a greater relief. **23.** *And* [R. V. **But**] *the Lord was gracious unto them*] Cf. for the sentiment, Malachi iii. 6. *as yet*] The compiler of Kings was living at the time of the captivity. He therefore knew that the grace and compassion had been shewn in vain, and that the kingdom of Israel had at last been utterly destroyed. **24.** *Ben-hadad his son*] Hazael has given to his son the name which had previously been common in the Syrian royal family. **25.** *And Jehoash...took again... the cities*] Ben-hadad must have been a very different monarch from his father. The fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen (verse 7) must have been allowed to increase very rapidly to effect so complete a change in the relations between Syria and Israel as is here represented. *Three times did Joash beat* [R.V. **smite**] *him*] The history is introduced that the prophecy of Elisha may be pointed out as fulfilled.

XIV. **1.** *In the second year of Joash...king of Israel*] See above on xiii. 1. *Joash son of Jehoahaz*] R.V. **Joahaz.** Following the Hebrew. *reigned Amaziah...king of Judah*] R.V. **began Amaziah...king of Judah to reign.** **2.** *He was twenty and five years old*] His father Joash died at about 47 years of age. So Amaziah was born when his father was twenty-two. *his mother's name* was *Jehoaddan*] R.V. **Jehoaddin.** **3.** *yet not like David his father*] The Chronicler merely gives 'but not with a perfect heart.' *according*

high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacri-
5 fice and burnt incense on the high places. And it came to
pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that
6 he slew his servants which had slain the king his father. But
the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that
which is written in the book of the law of Moses, where*in* the
LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to
death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the
fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.
7 He slew *of* Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took
Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

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to all things *as Joash his father did*] R.V. **had done.** Of course this can only refer to the general resemblance, not to the various parts of Amaziah's conduct. **5.** *as soon as the kingdom was confirmed* [R.V. **established**] *in his hand*] It is worth notice that the conspirators made no attempt, as it seems, to divert the succession from the house of David, though they might have expected that the son would take revenge on his father's murderers. **6.** *the children of the murderers he slew not*] R.V. **he put not to death.** *according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses*] The compiler of Kings either took this statement from his original record, or he inserted it in his narrative because he felt that it was an act which accorded with the legal command. In either case he looked upon the law as existing and observed in the days of Amaziah, and therefore that Deut. xxiv. 16, where this command is recorded, was existent before Amaziah's days, and therefore long before the days of Josiah, to which date some propose to refer the composition of the fifth book of Moses. *where*in [R.V. **as**] *the Lord commanded*] The change is in accordance with the Hebrew. *every man shall be put to death* [R.V. **shall die**] *for his own sin*] The text in Deut. xxiv. 16 agrees with the translation of A.V. and no doubt this was the reason why that form was preferred here also.

7. *He slew* of *Edom*] The Chronicler in 2 Chron. xxv. 5—10 gives an account of Amaziah's military preparations, before the expedition against Edom. *in the valley of salt*] The R.V. prints both 'Valley' and 'Salt' with capitals to mark it as a proper name. The Valley of Salt lay at the south of the Dead Sea, and was on the border of the Edomite territory. *ten thousand*] Beside the 10,000 slain in the battle, the Chronicler mentions 10,000 more who were taken captive, and cast headlong from the rock so 'that they all were broken in pieces' (2 Chron. xxv. 12).

and took Selah [R.V. **Sela**] *by war*] Sela which signifies 'a rock' is probably the city which was known in later times as 'Petra.' It was a city of Edom, not far from Mount Hor, about 2 days' journey northward from the top of the gulf of Akabah.

called the name of it Joktheel] This name, which is a trisyllable (Jokthe-ēl), is interpreted by Gesenius as 'subdued by God.' Amaziah would consider that the victory was a direct gift from God. *unto this day*] That Sela continued to be called Jokteel

Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of 8
Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us
look one another *in* the face. And Jehoash the king of Israel 9
sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in
Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give
thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild
beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou 10
hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee
up: glory *of this*, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou
meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and
Judah with thee? But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore 11
Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of
Judah looked one another *in* the face at Beth-shemesh, which
belongeth to Judah. And Judah was put to the worse before 12
Israel; and they fled every man to their tents. And Jehoash 13

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at the time when the book of Kings was compiled is in the highest degree improbable. But in this passage the compiler takes the words of an earlier writer, exactly as they stood, and that earlier record was made before Sela was recovered and before the name Joktheel had fallen into disuse.

8. *Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash*] The Chronicler gives a history anterior to the challenge of Amaziah, which explains why the king who had been divinely guided before the Edomite expedition was left without the like guidance afterwards. We are told that Amaziah brought back from Edom the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, and when a prophet was sent to rebuke him, he threatened the messenger of God with punishment. Upon this the prophet forbare, but left the king with the words, 'I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.' *Come, let us look one another* in *the face*] A figurative expression equivalent to 'Let us measure swords,' let us test each other's power. **9.** *the thistle...sent to the cedar*] What Jehoash wishes to express is that he feels himself utterly Amaziah's superior, and that he can take no notice of his message. Words could hardly convey more strongly the low opinion which Jehoash entertained of Amaziah's power. **10.** *and thine heart hath lifted thee up*] The more usual expression is that 'the heart is lifted up.' *glory* of this] R.V. **glory thereof**. i.e. of the Edomite conquest. *tarry* [R.V. **abide**] *at home*] As in 2 Chron. *why shouldest thou meddle to* thy *hurt*] The 'meddling' implied by the verb is generally the meddling of contention.

11. *Jehoash king of Israel went up*] When the king of Israel saw that Amaziah would persist, he apparently made the first movement. For Beth-shemesh, where the engagement took place, was in Amaziah's territory, on the northern boundary of Judah.

Beth-shemesh] The place is mentioned before this time as that to which the ark was brought when it was sent home by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi. 9, 12). **12.** *every man to their tents*]

king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash
the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came *to* Jerusalem,
and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of
14 Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And
he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were
found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the
15 king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. Now
the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might,
and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not
written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?
16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria
with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his
stead.
17 And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the
death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.
18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written
19 in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Now
they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he

See above on xiii. 5. **13.** *took Amaziah*] i.e. took him prisoner. And there is some difficulty in deciding what became of Amaziah at this time and afterwards. In 2 Chronicles xxv. 23 it is added that Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 9. 3) has given an account which makes Amaziah be brought as a captive into his own capital. The very formal way in which Amaziah is mentioned in this verse, as 'Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah,' seems to indicate that some crisis in the reign of this king is marked by the defeat at Beth-shemesh. Perhaps he was kept a prisoner till the death of Jehoash. *from the gate of Ephraim*] This portion of the wall was on the north of the city, opening towards the kingdom of Israel, and the demolition of a large part of the wall on that side was meant to leave the city exposed to the entry of the Israelites if they were desirous to come in. **14.** *and he took all the gold and silver*] The conquest appears to have been most complete. *and hostages*] R.V. **the hostages also.** As in Chronicles. There is no other mention in the sacred history of persons taken as pledges for the fulfilment of the conditions of a peace. *and returned to Samaria*] Having so disposed the affairs of the southern kingdom as to secure the peace of his own. **15.** *the rest of the acts of Jehoash*] The repetition of this sentence, which had been given in nearly the same terms in xiii. 12, shews us that the compiler probably used two documents, and copied from one in the former chapter, and from the other here.

17. *Amaziah...lived after the death of Jehoash*] It may be that while Jehoash was on the throne of Israel Amaziah was kept in subjection, if not a prisoner, and even after that never came again to the full enjoyment of his power. **19.** *Now* [R.V. **And**] *they made a conspiracy*] This was evidently the work of his own subjects. There must have been a feeling of hostility to

fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he was 20
buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which *was* sixteen 21
years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king 22
slept with his fathers.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king 23
of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel *began* to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years. And he 24
did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from the entering 25
of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of

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Amaziah among the right-minded of his own people, even before the battle of Beth-shemesh. Everything points to a desire on the part of the people of Judah to put down Amaziah on the first possible opportunity. *and he fled to Lachish*] Lachish was considerably south of Jerusalem, and Amaziah probably thought that from it he could more easily escape to Edom, or elsewhere, out of harm's way. *they sent after him*] But we may conclude that his pursuers were not allowed to seize him without some resistance. **20.** *they brought him on horses*] Perhaps this means that they used Amaziah's own chariot to convey the dead body to the royal city. **21.** *All the people of Judah took Azariah*] The people were all of one mind. They had rid themselves of the idolatrous father, but there was hope in the sixteen year old son. In Chronicles the name of this king is spelt *Uzziah*. This variation also occurs in the next chapter of 2 Kings (xv. 13, 30, 32, 34). **22.** *He built Elath*] Elath (also written *Eloth*) was at the northern extremity of the gulf of Akabah. 'Building' here of course means restoration. *and restored it to Judah*] As it had been in the days of Solomon. *after that the king slept with his fathers*] This is another of those vague notices which indicate an unusual state of things in Judah at this period. It would almost seem as though Azariah had been put in authority, if not on the throne, before the death of his father, and that he had been making his plans beforehand, only waiting for his father's death to carry them out.

23. *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah*] Cf. verses 1 and 17. Amaziah reigned 29 years, and he lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash king of Israel. **24.** *who made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made** &c. **25.** *He restored the coast of Israel*] Here, 'coast' has no reference to 'seaboard.' Jeroboam recovered the portions of Gilead and Bashan that had been lost under previous kings. *from the entering of Hamath*] R.V. **entering in of H.** This rendering is as in A.V. of 1 Kings viii. 65 and elsewhere. *unto the sea of the plain*] R.V. **of the Arabah**. The sea of the Arabah is the Dead Sea. Cf. Deut. iii.

his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was*
26 of Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not any shut up, nor any left, nor
27 any helper for Israel. And the LORD said not that *he* would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them
28 by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the
29 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

15 In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel

17; iv. 49; Josh. iii. 16; xii. 3. The Arabah is the name given to the valley from the Sea of Galilee southward to the desert. The district restored by Jeroboam was on the east of the Jordan, and extended from the valley of the Orontes where Hamath was situated, southward to the frontiers of the Moabites. *his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai*] This must be the same person to whom the prophecy of Jonah is ascribed, for it is impossible to believe that there were two persons of this name, both prophets and both sons of Amittai. Jonah must therefore have prophesied before (or early in) the reign of Jeroboam II., the commencement of whose reign is placed about B.C. 823. *which* was *of Gath-hepher*] The same place is called Gittah-hepher in Josh. xix. 13. It was not far from Nazareth in the tribe of Zebulon. **26.** *the affliction of Israel*] Occasioned by the inroads of the Syrians. (Cf. above xiii. 3, 7.) *for* there was *not any shut up, nor any left* [R.V. adds **at large**] *nor* [R.V. **neither was there**] *any helper*] For the change cf. 1 Kings xiv. 10 *note*. The expression means that there was no one, great or small, young or old, to whom they could look for aid. **27.** *And the Lord said not*] i.e. As yet the doom of Israel was not fixed. *but he saved them*] Jeroboam was the saviour spoken of in xiii. 5. See note there. **28.** *how he recovered Damascus*] We are told (2 Sam. viii. 6) that garrisons were placed in Damascus by David, and that the Syrians became servants to David. Having been once in the possession of the Israelites, the reconquest by Jeroboam II. may be spoken of as a recovery. *and Hamath*, which belonged [R.V. **had belonged**] *to Judah*] We find (2 Sam. viii. 9—11) that Toi the king of Hamath was one of David's tributaries, and from 1 Kings iv. 21—24 it is clear that in Solomon's days Hamath was part of his possessions. **29.** *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *his son*] This was the fourth in descent from Jehu. Now that dynasty came to an end.

XV. **1.** *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam*...began *Azariah*] This statement cannot be made to accord with the numbers given in the previous chapters. In xiv. 1 it is said that Amaziah the father of Azariah began to reign in the second year of Joash king of Israel. Now Joash (xiii. 10) reigned sixteen years.

began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Six- 2
teen years old was he when he *began* to reign, and he reigned
two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was*
Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which *was* right 3
in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father
Amaziah had done; save that the high places were not re- 4
moved: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the
high places. And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a 5
leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house.
And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the
people of the land. And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and 6
all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Azariah slept with his 7
fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of
David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

Therefore he lived fourteen years contemporary with Amaziah. And the latter lived (xiv. 17) after Joash's death fifteen years more. Hence his whole reign was twenty-nine years. Again, in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II. began to reign (xiv. 23). Hence Amaziah must have died and Azariah ascended the throne of Judah in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of Jeroboam, and not in the twenty-seventh as here stated. The numbers in the verse before us present a difficulty which has not yet been solved.

2. *his mother's name* was *Jecholiah*] R.V. **Jecoliah.** As in 2 Chron. xxvi. 3. **3.** *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight*] R.V. **eyes.** i.e. His obedience to God's law was partial, like that of his father, for he also allowed the high-places to remain and to be used for worship. **4.** *save that* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the high places*] The rendering is thus made to agree with verse 25 of this chapter. **5.** *And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper*] The more political history in Kings tells us nothing about the reason why Azariah was smitten. The Chronicler however says that the king presumed to go into the Temple, and to take upon him the priest's office of burning incense. *and dwelt in a several house*] The noun here is connected with the adjective that signifies 'free' and which is used of manumitted slaves. It has been suggested that the meaning here is that the place was one where those lived who could no longer mix with their fellows, and take part in the ordinary business of life. But in that case the building would be a public one or it would not have been so called. It appears therefore better to consider that the house was 'free' in the sense of 'standing apart,' not mixed up among other dwellings. *the king's son* was *over the house*] R.V. **household**. From 1 Kings iv. 6 where Ahishar is spoken of as being over Solomon's household, and 2 Kings xix. 2 where the same office is assigned to Eliakim in the time of Hezekiah, it is clear that the post was one of great dignity, but it was in no way connected with a regency.

6. *the rest of the acts of Azariah*] The record of these is said by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) to have been written, first and last, by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. **7.** *and they*

8 In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did
Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria
9 six months. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of
the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the
sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and
smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his
11 stead. And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are*
written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.
12 This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu,
saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the
fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass.
13 Shallum the son of Jabesh *began* to reign in the nine and
thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full
14 month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up
from Tirzah, and came *to* Samaria, and smote Shallum the
son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his

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buried him with his fathers in the city of David] His body, as appears from 2 Chron., was not laid with the rest of the kings in the royal sepulchre, but apparently in the same piece of land.

Jotham his son reigned] We can scarcely suppose that this notice would have been thus set down in the ordinary formula after Azariah's death, if Jotham had been joint ruler all the time of his father's leprosy.

8. *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *the son of Jeroboam*] This was the fourth generation of the family of Jehu. The sovereignty had been promised them no longer. **9.** *who* [R.V. **wherewith he**] *made Israel to sin*] And so elsewhere. **10.** *Shallum the son of Jabesh*] Nothing more is known of him than is given in this verse. *before the people*] i.e. publicly. Hence it would seem that the conspiracy of Shallum had large popular support.

11. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Zachariah*] We can see from the language of the prophet Amos that the corruption of Israel was very great at this time, and that the nation appeared incorrigible. In these excesses Zechariah no doubt bore his share. Hence the shortness of his reign. **12.** *the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu*] For the promise, see above, x. 30.

Thy sons] The R.V. brings the words 'to the fourth generation' forward in the verse and places them after 'sons,' thus making the sentence conform, as it does in the original, to the order of the words in the promise (x. 30).

13. *a full month*] R.V. **the space of a month.** The margin of A.V. gives, 'Heb. a month of days.' The Hebrew for 'of days' is added adverbially, as we use 'time' in such phrases as 'in a month's *time*'='in a month' 'in a year's *time*' &c. **14.** *Menahem the son of Gadi*] It has been suggested that Menahem was an officer of king Zechariah and advanced from Tirzah, where he was stationed, to Samaria to avenge the murder of his master.

Tirzah] Was made a royal residence by Jeroboam I. (1 Kings

stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy 15
which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that *were* therein, 16
and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not
to him, therefore he smote *it; and* all the women therein that
were with child he ript up. In the nine and thirtieth year of 17
Azariah king of Judah *began* Menahem the son of Gadi to
reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. And he 18
did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed
not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,
who made Israel to sin. *And* Pul the king of Assyria came 19
against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents

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xiv. 17). **15.** *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest* &c.] As above in verse 11. It may be noticed that Menahem's conduct in slaying Shallum is not called 'a conspiracy.' Menahem seems to have been a man of much ferocity, and probably carried out his plans without helpers.

16. *Menahem smote Tiphsah*] Tiphsah is mentioned 1 Kings iv. 24 as at one boundary of the dominion of Solomon. The place there intended is Thapsacus on the west side of the Euphrates. But that can hardly be the place intended here. It was more likely some place, not mentioned elsewhere, but within the kingdom of Israel. *and the coasts* [R.V. **borders**] *thereof*] That is, all the country round about this offending town. *from Tirzah*] After the slaughter of Shallum in Samaria, Menahem returned to Tirzah, and, making that his headquarters, went forth thence to reduce the country to subjection. *they opened not* to him] Josephus says they closed their gates and barred them against him. At a time when the king was changing every few months the citizens might naturally feel unwilling to admit a new claimant for the rule, till they were certain of what was happening elsewhere.

ript up] This savage conduct is mentioned (2 Kings viii. 12) among the enormities which Hazael was likely to perpetrate, and in the prophets (Hosea xiii. 16; Amos i. 13) it is specified as part of the sufferings of Samaria from her invaders, and as inflicted by the Ammonites on the women of Gilead. But nowhere except here do we find such cruelty exercised by an Israelite. It marks the time as one of great degradation and barbarity. **19.** And *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land*] R.V. **There came against the land Pul** &c. In his work on 'the Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament,' Prof. Schrader (p. 133, Engl. Trans. Vol. I. p. 230) identifies Pul with Tiglath-pileser. Another supposition is that Pul is the name of one of Tiglath-pileser's generals, who was in charge of the expedition against Israel. But he is in this verse very expressly called king of Assyria. *came against the land*] i.e. was making a hostile advance, and would have invaded Israel but for the bribe. *a thousand talents of silver*] This represents a very large sum. Omri only gave two talents of silver (1 Kings xvi. 24) for the ground on which he built

of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the
20 kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of
Israel, *even* of all the mighty *men* of wealth, of each man fifty
shekels *of* silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king
of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.
21 And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are*
they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings
22 of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah
his son reigned in his stead.
23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the
son of Menahem *began* to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and*
24 *reigned* two years. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the
sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam
25 the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. But Pekah the son
of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and
smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with
Argob and Arieh; and with him fifty men of the Gileadites:
26 and he killed him, and reigned in his room. And the rest of
the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they *are*
written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.
27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah
the son of Remaliah *began* to reign over Israel in Samaria,

Samaria. But we can have no doubt from the writings of the contemporary prophets that the northern kingdom was rich at this time. *that his hand might be with him*] The desire of Menahem was to secure Pul as an ally. To obtain this he no doubt acknowledged the Assyrian as his superior, and did homage to him, as well as paying him this large bribe. **20.** *Menahem exacted the money*] Fifty shekels=one maneh, was the sixtieth part of a talent of silver. Hence the mighty men of wealth must have numbered 60,000, a number which tells of the richness of the time. *stayed not there*] He had evidently made his approach to the very border, and perhaps over it. **22.** *Pekahiah his son*] Ten years of stern rule had enabled Menahem to secure the throne for his son, though the latter had but a short tenure of power.

25. *Pekah...a captain of his*] R.V. **his captain.** The word is the same which in vii. 2 is used for the captain (A.V. lord) on whose hand the king of Israel leaned. *in the palace* [R.V. **castle**] *of the king's house*] The word is rendered 'palace' everywhere in A.V. except Prov. xviii. 19, 'like the bars of a *castle*.' But here and in 1 Kings xvi. 18 (see note there) the sense requires some word expressive of security and protection from a foe. Hence the change in R.V. *with Argob and Arieh*] Doubtless two friends who had remained with Pekahiah to the last. *and he killed* [R.V. **slew**] *him and reigned in his room*] R.V. **stead**. The words are exactly the same in the original as the closing words of verse 10 above.

27. *Pekah the son of Remaliah*] This king is chiefly remarkable because of the attempts which he made against the kingdom of

and reigned twenty years. And he did *that* which *was* evil 28
in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of
Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. In the 29
days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of
Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah,
and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land
of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. And Hoshea 30
the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of
Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his
stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.
And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, 31
they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Israel.

In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of 32
Israel *began* Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to
reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he *began* to 33
reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his

Judah, and which gave rise to the prophecies recorded in Isaiah vii.—ix. **29.** *Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] This is the second Assyrian king of this name; the first having flourished in the twelfth century B.C. According to the Assyrian canon Tiglath-pileser reigned 18 years, from B.C. 745 to B.C. 727, and the conquests mentioned in this verse are supposed to have been made in B.C. 734. *Ijon*] In the north of Palestine, in the tribe of Naphtali. *Abel-beth-maachah*] R.V. **-maacah.** This city like Ijon lay in the extreme north of Israel. It is elsewhere called *Abel-maim*. *Janoah*] This place is mentioned nowhere else. *Kedesh*] This town was one of the cities of refuge, and situate in the tribe of Naphtali. Hence it is called Kedesh-Naphtali (Jud. iv. 6). *Hazor*] Another fortified city of the tribe of Naphtali. It stood on the high ground overlooking Lake Merom. It was a very important place before the Israelites entered Canaan (Josh. xi. 10). *Gilead*] The mountainous country on the east of the Jordan. *Galilee*] This name, though afterwards given to a wide district, was at first only applied to a portion of the country round about Kedesh-Naphtali. *all the land of Naphtali*] We can see, from this addition, where the ravages of Tiglath-pileser were made. He came into the northern portion of Israel on the west of Jordan, and on the east of the river overran a larger district, which from its mountainous character was more sparsely populated and so more easily reduced. *carried them captive to Assyria*] This event is placed from the evidence of the Assyrian inscriptions in B.C. 734. **30.** *Hoshea the son of Elah*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 13. 1) says Hoshea was a friend of Pekah. He is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions (Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 285), and it appears from that record as if he had been set up by the Assyrian king. *in the twentieth year of Jotham*] As Jotham is said below in verse 33 to have reigned only sixteen years, there must be some mistake in the numbers either here or there.

34 mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And he
did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did
35 according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit
the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and
burnt incense still in the high places. He built the higher
36 gate of the house of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts of
Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book
37 of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In those days the
LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria,
38 and Pekah the son of Remaliah. And Jotham slept with his
fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David
his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz
2 the son of Jotham king of Judah *began* to reign. Twenty
years old *was* Ahaz when he *began* to reign, and reigned

34. *according to all that his father Uzziah had done*] The Chronicler notes the great exception 'Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord.' **35.** *Howbeit the high places*] In 2 Chronicles it is merely said 'the people did yet corruptly.'

He built the higher [R.V. **upper**] *gate of the house of the Lord*] By 'build' is only meant 'restore' or 'beautify.' The gate existed before. The Temple stood on a slope, of which the northern side was the highest, and the gate on that side was the one of which Jotham made some restoration. **37.** *In those days*] In the days of Jotham the confederacy between Israel and Syria against Judah was formed, though the effects were not felt to the full till the days of Jotham's son Ahaz. In Isaiah vii. we find that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, had come up against Jerusalem to fight against it. At that time for the consolation and encouragement of Ahaz the oracle concerning 'Immanuel' was sent to him through Isaiah. *the Lord began to send*] Though He began to send enemies upon Judah, yet the Lord did not, as Isaiah's prophecy shews us, leave His people without hope. *Rezin the king of Syria*] The name of this king appears several times in the Assyrian records. His country had before this time been made tributary to Assyria. The policy of Rezin appears not only to have embraced a conquest of Judah in alliance with Pekah, but also, after making himself more powerful in that way, the shaking off the yoke of Assyria.

XVI. **1.** *In the seventeenth year of Pekah*] It is clear that some error has crept into the chronological statements of this period. In the previous chapter (xv. 30) we read that Pekah was murdered by Hoshea in the twentieth year of Jotham. From the present verse it seems that Ahaz began to reign, and so Jotham died, before Pekah's death. With reference to the death of Pekah in the reign of Jotham, we see from Is. vii. 1, that Pekah was still alive and conducting operations against Judah in the reign of Ahaz. This agrees entirely with verse 5 of the present chapter. Therefore in any chronological calculation the words of xv. 30 ought to be neglected. It is not easy to explain how the error arose, but it

sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. But 3
he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense 4
in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah 5
king of Israel came up *to* Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*. At that time Rezin 6
king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came *to* Elath, and dwelt there

is manifest that there is an error. **2.** *and did* [R.V. **he did**] *not* that *which* was *right*] This negative form of statement has not occurred in the account of any previous king of Judah. The offences of Ahaz were exceptional. **3.** *he walked in the way of the kings of Israel*] This is more fully explained by the Chronicler, and means that he followed after all kinds of heathen idolatry. *yea, and made his son to pass through the fire*] i.e. To Moloch. Thus introducing into Judah once more, as in Solomon's days (1 Kings xi. 7) the worship of 'the abomination of the children of Ammon.' The words of this verse might be made to refer only to a passing through flame, as a ceremony significant of purification. But the words of the Chronicler are stronger: 'he burnt his children in the fire.' From which it would appear that not one son only was offered. *according to the abominations of the heathen*] The word 'abomination' is constantly employed of idols and their worship, their rites being often of the foulest character. **4.** *And he sacrificed, &c.*] Hitherto we have heard only that *the people* continued the worship in the high places. Now *the king* takes part in the same, and so makes it doubly popular. *under every green tree*] Expressly mentioned (Deut. xii. 2) as among the wrong-doings of the heathen. **5.** *came up to Jerusalem to war*] The plans which had been formed in the reign of Jotham (see xv. 37) were now put into execution. And from Isaiah vii. 2 we can see into what agitation the people of Judah were brought by the advance of the allied enemies. *they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome* him] i.e. They never took Jerusalem (cf. Is. vii. 1). This is the security which Isaiah was instructed to promise to Ahaz. **6.** *Rezin...recovered Elath to Syria*] Elath was a place of much importance to the Jews. It was situate at the top of the gulf of Akabah, and was part of the land of Edom. But when the Edomites were in subjection to Judah, the port was to all intents and purposes a harbour of Judah. Now the Jews were driven from it, and the Syrians came and occupied it, having overrun Edom in their progress towards Elath.

and dwelt there unto this day] On this expression as a mark of faithful reproduction by the compiler of what he found in the document he was using, see note on chap. ii. 22. The Chronicler, before mentioning the appeal of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser, which is

7 unto this day. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser
king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant and thy son: come
up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and
out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against
8 me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found *in*
the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's
9 house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria. And
the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of
Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried
the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.
10 And king Ahaz went *to* Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser
king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and

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here related in the next verse, gives an account how the two hundred thousand captives taken by the Israelites (see above on verse 5) were brought to Samaria, and how Oded, a prophet of the Lord, forbad in God's name that the children of Judah and Jerusalem should be kept by Israel for bondmen and bondwomen. Some also among the chief men of Israel declared that the captives should not be brought into Samaria. They were in consequence set free, and, after being fed and clothed, were conducted homeward as far as Jericho. **7.** *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] According to 2 Chron. (xxviii. 17, 18) it was not only by Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel that Ahaz was straitened when he sent for help to Assyria. *I am thy servant and thy son*] Ahaz, in return for the help he seeks, offers to make himself the vassal of Assyria. Ahaz in his petition naturally only mentions those enemies on the north upon whom Tiglath-pileser could most readily fall. Perhaps he felt that, if relieved from them, he could dispose of the Edomites and Philistines by his own power. **8.** *silver and gold that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] Ahaz appears to have dealt very irreverently with the treasures of the Temple. for *a present*] The word is not that term for present which literally signifies 'blessing' (see note on v. 15). This word has rather the sense of a 'bribe.' So that the *present* of Ahaz is not represented by this word as of a noble character. **9.** *the king of Assyria went up against Damascus*] In the Assyrian records it appears that Tiglath-pileser went first against Damascus in B.C. 733, but not being successful came again next year and then reduced the city. (Schrader, p. 152.) *to Kir*] The LXX. does not represent these words, and we have no certain data to guide us to the locality intended. Isaiah, who lived close amid all these events, places Elam and Kir in close conjunction (xxii. 6). Elam was in lower Mesopotamia, Kir was therefore most likely in the same district. *and slew Rezin*] Thus making himself entire master of Syria. Hence Tiglath-pileser appears to have stayed some time in Damascus.

10. *king Ahaz went* to *Damascus*] Summoned no doubt by the Assyrian king to make full submission to the power which had relieved him from the attacks of Rezin. *and saw an* [R.V. **the**] *altar*] The noun is definite in the original, and probably the

king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that 11
king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus. And when 12
the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and 13
poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. And he brought also the 14
brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. And king 15
Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great

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most conspicuous and grandest among the altars of Damascus is intended. We must think of the most splendid altar in Rimmon's finest temple as the pattern which Ahaz sent home. *sent to Urijah the priest*] This may be the same person who is mentioned by Isaiah viii. 2 as one of the faithful witnesses whom he chose for himself. If this be so, he must have grievously fallen away ere the priest of Jehovah's temple would be agent for the manufacture of an idolatrous altar. **11.** *so Urijah...Damascus*] The R.V. renders this clause **so did Urijah the priest make it.** This is done to shew that the word 'so' refers to the previous phrase 'according to all that king Ahaz had sent'. **12.** *and the king approached to* [R.V. **drew near unto**] *the altar*] The rendering adopted by R.V. is much the most frequent in A.V. *and offered thereon*] At such an altar he might be his own priest. **13.** *his meat offering*] R.V. **meal offering.** See above on iii. 20 note. The same change is to be made three times over in verse 15 below. The king's wish and order was that not only all his own sacrifices, but all those of the people, should be offered upon the new altar. **14.** *And he brought &c.*] The R.V. adheres to the Hebrew order. **And the brasen altar, which was before the Lord, he brought from the forefront of the house.** This brasen altar is described 2 Chron. iv. 1, its length and breadth being each twenty cubits, and its height ten cubits. This altar, placed in its position when the Temple was built, and standing exactly in front of the porch end entrance to the Temple, Ahaz now removed. *from between the* [R.V. **his**] *altar and the house*] At first the new altar was set a little behind the brasen one, but on the same line as one looked at them from the Temple-porch. This arrangement Ahaz changes, and taking away the brasen altar, he leaves his own in the front of the Temple, and carries the older and more sacred altar to the north side of the new one. Thus they both stood in a line parallel to the front of the house, but the king's new altar had the place of honour, before the Temple-doors. **15.** *Upon the great altar*] By this name he distinguishes his own altar. For an account of the burnt

altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*.
16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz
17 commanded. And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it
18 upon a pavement of stones. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry with-

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offering, which was accompanied also by a meal offering and a drink offering, see Exod. xxix. 38—42. It would almost appear that in the time of Ahaz the Mosaic ritual was relaxed, and the burnt offering made in the morning and the meal offering in the evening. *the king's burnt sacrifice*] R.V. **offering**. The word is the same as in the previous clause, and in that which follows immediately. *all the blood of the sacrifice*] The change made in the previous note was most needful, because here we have a different word, and one which is always rendered 'sacrifice.' The distinction between 'burnt offering' and 'sacrifice,' of both of which all the blood is commanded to be sprinkled on the new altar, is that in the former the whole animal was consumed in the fire, whereas in 'sacrifices,' e.g. of peace offerings, only some portion of the victim was burnt, and the other parts eaten by the offerers. *and* [R.V. **but**] *the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire* by] No doubt the verb here used is found in the sense of 'to inquire' after God and God's will, as in Ps. xxvii. 4, 'to inquire in His temple,' though in that verse some render 'to consider,' 'to look with pleasure upon.' But Ahaz was not minded to do any such thing. He was casting away Jehovah's worship as fully and as fast as he could. It seems better therefore to render these words, 'but as regards the brasen altar it shall be for me to inquire,' i.e. I will see later on what shall be done with it. **17.** *Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases*] For a description of these bases, which were moveable stands to carry the lavers used for the sacrifices, see 1 Kings vii. 27—39. The borders were of highly wrought ornamental work, made by Hiram of Tyre for king Solomon. *removed the laver from off them*] i.e. from each of them. *and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen*] This sea was also the work of Hiram. See 1 Kings vii. 23—26. **18.** *And the covert* [R.V. **the covered way**] *for the sabbath*] The noun, which occurs nowhere else, signifies some colonnade along which the king could pass when on the sabbath he went to the Temple. *that they had built in the house*] i.e. in the Temple court, not in the interior of the Temple building. *and the king's entry without*] This is perhaps the 'ascent' mentioned 2 Chron. ix. 4, and which called forth the great

out, turned he *from* the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they 19
not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Judah? And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried 20
with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son
reigned in his stead.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah *began* Hoshea the **17**
son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And 2
he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not
as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him 3

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admiration of the queen of Sheba. *turned he* from [R.V. **unto**] *the house of the Lord*] There is considerable difficulty in this clause. One thing however is clear, that 'from' cannot be correct. The accusative is the case of direction, and there is no preposition expressed in the original. Hence 'unto' must be the sense. *for* [R.V. **because of**] *the king of Assyria*] The preposition=literally 'from the face of' is a form constantly employed after verbs of fleeing (Gen. xvi. 8), of seeking help (Is. xix. 20), and so of fearing, humbling oneself, trembling, &c. This is its sense here. Ahaz did what he did, because he was fearful that otherwise the Assyrian king would seize on all that was choicest.

19. *the rest of the acts of Ahaz*] The Chronicler gives us somewhat more detail concerning the doings of this king. 'He gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut them in pieces: he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.' *in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah*] In 2 Chron. xxviii. 26 we are referred to the record of Israel as well as of Judah, and the war with Pekah would no doubt form a large chapter in the history of the former kingdom. **20.** *was buried with his fathers*] The Chronicler says 'they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.' For bodily leprosy Uzziah had been treated in the same way after death, and the moral and spiritual leprosy of the idol-loving Ahaz was worthy of a like deprivation.

XVII. **1.** *In the twelfth year of Ahaz*...began *Hoshea*...*to reign*] This is one more evidence that there is error in the chronological statements. In xv. 30 Hoshea is said to have begun to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham. As in xv. 33 Jotham's reign is stated to have been only sixteen years, the two statements are contradictory. Moreover we find that Pekah was not slain in Jotham's reign, but was an active monarch in the days of Ahaz. **2.** *but not as the kings of Israel that were before him*] We have no record of the doings of Hoshea, so as to specify in what points he was better than his predecessors. A long persistence in evil-doing had however corrupted the whole nation,

came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became
4 his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of
5 Assyria shut him up, and bound him *in* prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went
6 up *to* Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

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and the cutting short which had begun under the house of Jehu (x. 32) was now very nearly completed. **3.** *Shalmaneser king of Assyria*] This king according to the Assyrian monuments succeeded Tiglath-pileser, and was succeeded by Sargon. His reign lasted from B.C. 727—722. *and Hoshea became his servant*] Probably it was in this way that Hoshea made himself strong enough to attack Pekah, and to mount the throne.

and gave [R.V. **brought**] *him presents*] The word for 'presents' is that which came to be used for 'the meal-offering' of the Israelites. **4.** *found conspiracy in Hoshea*] No doubt the tributary princes were watched by Assyrian residents in their courts, and the news of negotiations with a foreign power would soon be sent from Samaria to Shalmaneser. *to So king of Egypt*] The identification of this monarch is somewhat doubtful. The most probable supposition is that he is the same with either Shebek or Shebetek, the first and second kings of the Ethiopian twenty-fifth dynasty. *and brought* [R.V. **offered**] *no present*] As the word for 'present' here and in verse 3 is the usual one for the 'meal-offering' (see note above) so the verb employed here is that which is constant in the accounts of 'offering' sacrifices. Hence the change. *the king of Assyria shut him up*] Cf. Jerem. xxxiii. 1; xxxvi. 5; xxxix. 15, which all refer to imprisonment. **5.** *throughout all the land*] It seems to have been the usual plan of invaders to overrun the places more easily conquerable before they assailed the chief stronghold. *besieged it three years*] Samaria from its position on a hill and from the pains bestowed on its building must have been a city of considerable strength for those days. It seems from the records that the city was not taken by the Assyrians during the reign of Shalmaneser, but in the beginning of the reign of Sargon his successor. See Smith, *Assyrian Canon*, p. 201. **6.** *in Halah*] Most likely this is the district directly north from Thapsacus between Anthemusia and Gauzonitis. *and in Habor*] Habor is the river still known as the *Khabour*, which flows through Gauzonitis, and empties itself into the Euphrates at Circesium. Hence 'on Habor, the river of Gozan,' would be a better rendering of the Hebrew. by [R.V. **on**] *the river*] There is no preposition

For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against 7
the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the
land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt,
and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the 8
heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of
Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And 9
the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not
right against the LORD their God, and they built them high
places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to
the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in 10
every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they 11
burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom
the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things

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in the original, it is therefore better to take 'the river of Gozan' as in apposition with Habor.

7. *For* so *it was, that*] R.V. **And it was so because**. A better form of introduction to this account of the causes of the captivity. These are recited under three heads. First, on entering Canaan Israel adopted the idol worship of the people of the land, and would not listen to the warnings of God's prophets. Secondly, the ten tribes made the molten calves; and thirdly, they adopted the worship of Baal and Moloch and other idolatries from the more distant people, and indulged in all the practices of divination and enchantment which were attendant on these heathen forms of worship. *which had* [R.V. omits *had*] *brought them up*] This omission makes the clause refer, as it does in the Hebrew, exactly to the same time as 'whom the Lord cast out' in the following verse. **8.** *and walked in the statutes of the heathen*] The book of Judges is full of instances of the way in which the people again and again fell away to the practices of the Canaanites (cf. Judges ii. 11—13). *and of the kings of Israel, which they had* [R.V. omits *had*] *made*] i.e. In the statutes of the kings of Israel.

9. *And the children of Israel did secretly*] The verb here used occurs nowhere else in the Bible, though one apparently cognate, and differing only by a single letter, is found several times. This latter is used of covering the head, and also of covering walls with gold to look more beautiful than the bare stone would do. From the first notion comes the sense 'they did secretly' which both A.V. and R.V. prefer. *from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city*] This seems a sort of proverbial expression. It is found again xviii. 8. The towers, in which watchmen were stationed to keep guard over the flocks and crops, were always in the most lonely and deserted spots, while fenced cities implied the presence of many inhabitants. So the sense appears to be 'in the loneliest as well as in the most populous places.'

10. *images and groves in*] R.V. **pillars and Asherim upon**. On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the Asherim, see on xiii. 6.

11. *as* did *the heathen*] R.V. **the nations**. And so again in verse 15. When a distinction is to be marked between God's people and idolaters, 'heathen' is a fair rendering. But here

12 to provoke the LORD to anger: for they served idols, whereof
the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.
13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by
all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from
your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes,
according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and
14 which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwith-
standing they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like
to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD
15 their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant
that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he
testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became
vain, and *went* after the heathen that *were* round about them,
concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that *they* should
16 not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the
LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two
calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of
17 heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and

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when there is no such marked severance 'nations' is the better translation. **12.** *idols, whereof the Lord had said*] The prohibition is given in the Ten Commandments (Exod. xx. 4).

Ye shall not do this thing] Cf. Deut. xii. 4. The golden calves were set up by Jeroboam as a form of worship to Jehovah.

13. *the Lord testified against* [R.V. **unto**] *Israel, and against* [R.V. **unto**] *Judah*] The preposition is that which is usually rendered 'in.' And God's witness by His prophets was at first a witness of warning and exhortation, and His anger was long restrained and not at first grievously kindled against them. *by all the prophets*, and by *all the seers*] R.V. **by the hand of every prophet, and of every seer.** *Turn ye from your evil ways*] For the language cf. Jer. vii. 3; xviii. 11; xxv. 5; xxvi. 13; xxxv. 15. *by my servants*] R.V. **by the hand of my servants.** As in the earlier part of this verse and again in verse 23, this Hebraism is preserved by the revisers.

14. *hardened their necks*] R.V. **neck.** The original has the singular, the people being regarded as one body. Israel throughout the Scripture is constantly reproached as a 'stiffnecked' people. *that did not believe*] R.V. **who believed not.**

15. *they followed vanity*] 'Vanity' is constantly employed in Scripture of false gods. They are nothing and can do nothing.

16. *And they left* [R.V. **forsook**] *all the commandments*] The R.V. adopts the most usual rendering of the verb, which is stronger in such a combination than 'left.' It is noteworthy that the sin of the calves is connected with the casting away of all the divine law. *a grove*] R.V. **an Asherah.** See above on verse 10.

and worshipped all the host of heaven] On the temptation to this worship of the heavenly bodies, and its prohibition, cf. Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. See also what is said of Hezekiah's and Josiah's reforma-

their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD 18
was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also 19
Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And 20
the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until *he* had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the 21
house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked 22
in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as 23
he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

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tions. **17.** *to pass through the fire*] Of the character of this Moloch-worship, see above xvi. 3, note. *used divination and enchantments*] The former word probably refers to some way of seeking out guidance by lots, or by arrows with different marks on them, and the words on the selected one were taken as a direction what to do (cf. Ezek. xxi. 21, 22). The latter word refers to omens derived from sights or sounds. This was the way in which Joseph used his divining cup (Gen. xliv. 5). *sold themselves to do evil*] R.V. **that which was evil**. The phrase is used before of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 25). **18.** *removed them out of his sight*] The language is accommodated to human ideas. God's eye was regarded as specially directed to the land of Canaan, where He had chosen to place His Name. **19.** *walked in the statutes of Israel*] Which were not of God's ordinance but of Israel's own devising. This was specially the case when the son of Jehoshaphat intermarried with a daughter of Ahab, and so brought in Baal-worship and its attendant abominations. **20.** *the hand of spoilers*] The first of whom, mentioned below, is Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led them astray, and the next is the king of Assyria, who carried them captive. **21.** *and Jeroboam drave*] The verb is found only here, but its sense is well established from a cognate verb with slightly different orthography. The commencement of the calf-worship was through Jeroboam, and no doubt he used every means in his power to constrain his subjects to follow in his ways. **22.** *they departed not from them*] For among all the nineteen kings of Israel not one has a good character. **23.** *as he had said by all his servants the prophets*] R.V. **as he spake by the hand of all his servants the prophets**. These were probably more numerous in connexion with the northern kingdom than with the kingdom of Judah, and conspicuous among them were the great figures of Elijah and Elisha. *to Assyria unto this day*] See above on ii. 22.

24 And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and
from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from
Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead
of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and
25 dwelt in the cities thereof. And *so* it was at the beginning of
their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore
the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them.
26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The
nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of
Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: there-
fore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay
them, because they know not the manner of the God of the

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24. *the king of Assyria brought* men *from Babylon*] These would most likely be the leaders of the colony as coming from the capital of the empire. *and from Cuthah*] It is not certain what district is intended by this name. *and from Ava*] R.V. **Avva**. This is without doubt the same place as *Irah* (R.V. **Ivvah**) of xviii. 34 below. The place is not clearly identified, but opinions incline to make it the same as *Ahava*, which stood where the modern *Hit* does, on the Euphrates at some distance to the N.W. of Babylon. *and from Hamath*] This was the well-known Syrian city on the Orontes, which we read of as recovered by Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xiv. 28, where see note) but which the Assyrians soon afterwards re-conquered (2 Kings xviii. 34), and seem now to have brought some of its population southward to Samaria. *and from Sepharvaim*] This place is mentioned also in xviii. 34 among cities which had been reduced to subjection by the Assyrians (cf. also xix. 13 and Is. xxxvii. 13). It is identified with the famous town of *Sippara* on the Euphrates, a little distance above Babylon. *instead of the children of Israel*] We are not from these words to suppose that all the Israelites were taken away. **25.** *the Lord sent lions among them, which slew* [R.V. **killed**] some *of them*] The word rendered 'slew' is not the same here as that in the next verse. This statement must be considered as the thought of the people themselves. How far it might also be shared by the writer of Kings we cannot know. These heathen people having regarded their own divinities as especially attached to certain places, would consider that Israel had also its own local deity. Him and His worship they were ignorant of, and when the wild beasts increased upon them it was a natural idea with them to regard the plague as inflicted by the god of the country. **26.** *they spake to the king of Assyria*] Whose thoughts on such a matter would be in accord with their own, and who would therefore take steps that the colonists should be instructed in the worship of the local deity.

thou hast removed] R.V. **carried away**. For the word in the original is the same which is translated 'carried away' above in verse 11, and a different verb from that which is rendered 'removed' in verse 18. *the manner of the God of the land*] i.e. the way in which he would desire to be worshipped.

land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry 27
thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and
let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the
manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests 28
whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in
Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.
Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* 29
in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had
made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And 30
the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of
Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,
and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites 31

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27. *one of the priests whom ye brought from thence*] The Assyrian king took what he would believe to be the best step towards remedying the mischief. A priest of the Israelitish worship was clearly the right person to be sent. No doubt all the priests were among the population that had been carried away. Hence the few Israelites left behind would not be regarded as capable of instructing the new colonists. For among the heathen, 'the manner,' i.e. the ceremonial and particular observances in performing worship, was the matter of highest import.

let them go] The priest would not be expected to go alone.

and let him teach] The priest would naturally be the teacher.

28. *Then* [R.V. **So**] *one of the priests whom they had carried away*] We can see from this that the events here spoken of took place within a very limited time. The priest who had been taken away from Samaria was still alive, and in vigour enough to be selected to go back again and to undertake the office of a teacher among the heathen colonists. *came and dwelt in Beth-el*] The place where one of the golden calves had been set up. *how they should fear the Lord*] For the worship of the ten tribes was professedly a worship of Jehovah, though performed in a manner contradictory to His express commandment.

29. *Howbeit every nation made gods of their own*] When they beheld the calves of Dan and Beth-el, they would see nothing higher in them than in their own objects of worship. So the adoption of the new form of worship would not draw them from the attachment to their earlier divinities. *the high places which the Samaritans*] All was ready for the strangers to set up their idols in every place to which they came. **30.** *Succoth-benoth*] Probably meant to represent the Chaldæan goddess *Zir-banit*, the wife of Merodach, who was specially worshipped in Babylon.

Nergal] The Assyrian or Babylonian god who answers to the classic Mars, the god of war. *Ashima*] Jewish tradition explains this name as signifying a short-haired goat. Hence it has been thought that the divinity so called was a sort of oriental Pan, a god of shepherds and of the woods. **31.** *And the Avites* [R.V. **Avvites**] *made Nibhaz*] Of Nibhaz nothing is known with certainty. The Jewish commentators explain the word as connected with a root signifying 'to bark,' and say that the

burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech,
32 the gods of Sepharvaim. So they feared the LORD, and made
unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high
places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high
33 places. They feared the LORD, and served their own gods,
after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from
34 thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners:
they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or
after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment
which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he
35 named Israel; with whom the LORD had made a covenant, and
charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow
36 yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: but
the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with
great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and

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idol was a human figure with a dog's head. And the want of any better information forces us to be content with supposing that the explanation of the Rabbis may be correct. *and Tartak*] The same Jewish tradition represents Tartak as worshipped under the form of an ass. *the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire*] This was a species of Moloch-worship, and the names given to the divinities indicate this. Adrammelech is explained as the male power of the Sun, and Anammelech as the female power. This agrees with what Berosus (*Frag.* 7) says in explanation of the name Sippara, which is identified with Sepharvaim. He calls it 'the city of the Sun.' **32.** *So they feared the Lord*] i.e. in the way in which their ideas of the worship of the local divinity demanded. *and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests*] R.V. **and made unto them from among themselves priests**. See note on 1 Kings xii. 31. The word represented by 'lowest' means an 'end' or 'extremity,' but the idea of the phrase is that the choice of these priests was made anywhere, from the whole mass of the nation. *houses of the high places*] Hence it seems that not an altar only, but a temple of some kind was erected on the high places. **33.** *They feared the Lord*] It seems almost as if the writer had repeated this phrase here and in the previous verse, and afterwards in verse 41, in mockery of this spurious reverence, on which Jehovah could set no value. *after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence*] R.V. **from among whom they had been carried away**. The literal meaning of the latter words is 'from whence [men] carried them away.' **34.** *they fear not the Lord*] i.e. This worship of Jehovah, merely because they regard Him as the local deity of the land, is no worship at all. God will not be served from policy. *neither do they after their statutes*] 'Their' refers by anticipation to 'the children of Jacob,' who are mentioned at the close of the verse. *after the law and commandment*] As the preposition is twice expressed in Hebrew, R.V. has **or after the commandment**. *whom he named Israel*] See Gen. xxxii. 28. **36.** *and him shall ye*

him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And 37
the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. And the covenant 38
that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and 39
he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former 40
manner. So these nations feared the LORD, and served their 41
graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, *so* do they unto this day.

Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah 18
king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah *began* to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he 2
began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of 3
the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He 4
removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down

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worship] R.V. **and unto him shall ye bow yourselves.** The verb is the same which is so rendered in the verse before.

37. *which he wrote for you*] The compiler of Kings considered, as we can gather from this expression, that 'the statutes and ordinances,' even the whole Law, was written down for the Israelites, and was of divine origin. The quotations made above are found in Deuteronomy, chapters iv. v. and vi. **40.** *Howbeit they did not hearken*] From the recital of God's covenant and testimony unto Israel, the writer now turns to the new colonists of Samaria. They had heard, from the priest sent to them, an account of the Lord, the God of Israel, and of what He had done for His people. For the priest would point to the God who brought Israel out of Egypt. This the writer appears to think should have moved the new-comers to regard Jehovah as far above any local deity.

41. *both their children*] R.V. **their children likewise.** A change which makes a semicolon necessary at the end of the previous clause. It would seem from this statement that the mixed population in Samaria adhered to their several forms of idolatry through several generations, though we know that on the return of the captive Jews from Babylon, B.C. 534, their descendants claimed to be allowed to take part in the restoration of the Temple.

XVIII. **1.** *in the third year of Hoshea*] See Chronological Table in the Introduction. **2.** *His mother's name also* was *Abi*] R.V. **and his mother's name was Abi.** In Chronicles the name is given as Abijah. **3.** *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight of the Lord*] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxix. xxx. xxxi.) gives among the good deeds of Hezekiah some that are not noticed by the compiler of Kings. **4.** *brake the images* [R.V. **pillars**] *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherah.** On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the 'Asherah,' which was probably the

the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn
5 incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him.
6 For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded
7 Moses. And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king
8 of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.
9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of

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wooden image of a goddess so called, see on xiii. 6. *the brasen serpent*] There can be no doubt that, after the cures wrought (Numb. xxi. 9) by looking at the serpent which Moses made, this object, the sacrament of so great a blessing, would be reverently kept, and there is no reason to suppose that it would be allowed to become lost or to be broken in pieces. *for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it*] The record does not tell us when this worship of the brasen serpent began. But in the midst of the many objects set up to be adored in the degenerate days of some of the kings, the adoration of the brasen serpent would be counted among the most reputable. *and he called it Nehushtan*] It is perhaps better to take an indefinite word as nominative to the verb 'called:' '*one* called it', i.e. 'it was called' as is given in the margin of R.V. The word *Nehushtan* meaning 'a piece of brass' or 'something made of brass' may either be taken as a term of contempt, or it may be the name which had in process of time come to be applied by everybody to this brasen figure. **5.** *after him was none like him...nor* any [R.V. **among them**] *that were before him*] The comparison is with individual kings. **6.** and *departed not*] R.V. **he departed not**. Thus italics are avoided, and the emphasis of the verse seems to be strengthened. *which the Lord commanded Moses*] Another indication that the compiler of Kings, or it may be the earlier authority from which he drew, accepted the Law as given by God to Moses. **7.** *he rebelled against the king of Assyria*] Ahaz had purchased Assyrian help against Rezin and Pekah (xvi. 7—9) and had become the vassal of Tiglath-pileser. The revolt of Hezekiah seems to have been made regardless of the terms on which this help had been given. For when Sennacherib comes to attack him, he feels he must admit (verse 14) that he has offended, 'I have offended, return from me, that which thou puttest on me will I bear.' **8.** *he smote the Philistines* even *unto Gaza*] Gaza was the most southern of the five great towns of the Philistines. *from the tower of the watchmen*, &c.] See above on xvii. 9 note.

Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they 10
took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king 11
of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD 12
their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

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9. *Shalmaneser...came up against Samaria, and besieged it*] Probably the negotiations with So king of Egypt had still gone forward (xvii. 4), and the tribute due from Israel to Assyria had continued to be unpaid. *and besieged it*] Shalmaneser commenced the siege, but the city was not taken till the reign of his successor, Sargon. **10.** *at the end of three years they took it*] The siege of Samaria lasted from B.C. 724 to B.C. 722, and the capture was among the earliest events of Sargon's reign. **11.** *did carry away Israel*] R.V. transposes the last two words that the order may be the same as in xvii. 6. **12.** *his covenant*, and [R.V. **even**] *all that Moses...commanded*] Thus R.V. avoids the italics. *the servant of the Lord*] This name is often given to Moses in the earlier books. See Deut. xxxiv. 5, where it is found in the notice of his death. It is specially frequent in the book of Joshua. Cf. Josh. i. 1, 13, 15; viii. 31, 33; xi. 12, &c. *hear* them [R.V. **it**] *nor do* them [R.V. **it**] The change is required by reason of the previous alteration in the verse. At this point terminates the Biblical history of the ten tribes. The people were for the most part carried away, and settled in various places in Assyria, and they never came again to their own land, which continued to be occupied by the settlers introduced by Shalmaneser. Some of the descendants of the Israelite tribes, we can hardly doubt, joined themselves to their brethren of Judah in the later days when the two tribes also were carried captive by the same power. These would return when the captivity was at an end, and so we find notices in the later history of persons who were members of one or other of the ten tribes. That the number of the tribes was kept in mind we can see from the dedication service after the Captivity (Ezra vi. 17), where among the sacrifices offered are 'twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.' In the Apocryphal books we have mention of the same service in nearly similar words (1 Esdr. vii. 8). Tobit (Tob. i. 1) was of the tribe of Naphtali. In the book of Judith (vi. 15) we read of Ozias the son of Micha of the tribe of Simeon, in St Luke (ii. 36) Anna the daughter of Phanuel is of the tribe of Asher, in Acts (xxvi. 7) the language of St Paul shews that members of the twelve tribes were believed to be existing among the Jews of Palestine and of the Dispersion; to which twelve tribes St James (i. 1) also addresses his Epistle.

13 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Senna-
cherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of
14 Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to
the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return
from me: *that* which thou puttest on me will I bear. And
the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah
15 three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And
Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found *in* the house
16 of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that
time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple
of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah
had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.
17 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and

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13. *Sennacherib king of Assyria*] Sennacherib was the son of Sargon, but as it seems not the eldest, and only became heir to the throne in the year before his father's death. He is said to have begun his reign B.C. 705, and to have been murdered in 681. The operations against Hezekiah seem to have been only part of a larger campaign, which appears to have been directed against those states which were in alliance with Egypt. *all the fenced cities of Judah*] These were subjugated first, that there might be no chance of help from them if it became necessary to assault the capital. **14.** *to Lachish*] On the situation and previous history of Lachish, see on xiv. 19. *I have offended*] It seems most natural to gather from this that Hezekiah had begun his movement for rebellion without any provocation from Assyria. The compact between Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser he would no doubt find galling, but his confession of a fault shews that he had attempted to withdraw his homage merely because he thought himself strong enough to do so. *three hundred talents of silver*] On the value of the talent of silver and of gold, see on v. 5. The amount exacted on this occasion is not so great as that taken by Pul from Menahem, which was a thousand talents of silver.

15. *all the silver that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] The like emptying of the treasuries, both of the Temple and of the king, had been made a very few years before (xvi. 8) by Ahaz to purchase the alliance of Tiglath-pileser against Pekah and Rezin. **16.** *cut off* the gold from *the doors of the temple*] Plainly shewing that there was a great scarcity of gold at this time.

17. *the king of Assyria sent Tartan*] In the light of the record in Chronicles, which says nothing of the previous proceedings of Sennacherib, we must consider that there was but one expedition, and that first came Hezekiah's submission, which was unavailing, and then followed the advance upon Jerusalem. We can imagine many things which induced Sennacherib not to keep faith with Hezekiah, but most probably it was the movements of the Egyptians in the south. Finding that they were advancing he would resolve on attacking and reducing Jerusalem before they arrived, and would care nothing for former compacts. *Tartan*, as well as the other two names here given, is probably an official title. *and*

Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host *against* Jerusalem. And they went up and came *to* Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there 18
came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak 19
ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of

Rabsaris] The word is Hebrew in form, and may be some title which the Jews modified so as to make of it a Hebrew word. Clearly in this place it indicates some high official. *and Rab-shakeh*] This word also has a Hebrew form, and means 'the chief cup-bearer.' The title may have been preserved and attached to an office, when the duties from which it was originally given had ceased to be performed, and others had been imposed in their place. *with a great host*] For Jerusalem was stronger than the other places in Judah which he had already captured.

against *Jerusalem*] R.V. **unto Jerusalem**. *they came and stood by the conduit*] The Chronicler gives us details which shew that some time elapsed before the attack on Jerusalem was commenced. Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem. He therefore took counsel with his princes and blocked up all the water-courses and fountains, so that the Assyrians should have as little water supply as possible. He also strengthened the fortifications, provided new weapons, and organized his forces. Then he gathered the people and encouraged them, so that they 'rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah.' All this had been done before the arrival of Rab-shakeh and his fellows. *the upper pool*] This is probably what in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30 is called 'the upper watercourse of Gihon.' **18.** *And when they had called to the king*] i.e. had made it known in some way to the warders that they had a message for the king. *Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which* was *over the household*] This is the man who is spoken of in such terms of praise by Isaiah (xxii. 20—25). *and Shebna* [R.V. **Shebnah**] *the scribe*] The orthography of the name is varied in this chapter. In verse 37 it is written Shebna, but here and in 26 'Shebnah.' This Shebnah had originally held the office which was at this time Eliakim's (Is. xxii. 15—19), but had been put down because of his luxury and also because he was a favourer of the alliance with Egypt. *Joah the son of Asaph the recorder*] Joah is only mentioned in this narrative and the parallel chapter in Isaiah. His office was that of 'chronicler.' Thus a faithful statement would be put on record of all that took place. **19.** *Speak ye now to Hezekiah*] Their message was first addressed to the king, but afterwards they turn (verse 29) to the people who had gathered to hear the parley. *the great king*] Hezekiah would know that his own father Ahaz had been one of

20 Assyria, What confidence *is* this where*in* thou trustest? Thou
sayest, (but *they are but* vain words,) *I have* counsel and
strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that
21 thou rebellest against me? Now behold, thou trustest upon
the staff of this bruised reed, *even* upon Egypt, on which if a
man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh
22 king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto
me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not *that* he, whose high
places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath
said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this
23 altar in Jerusalem? Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges
to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two
thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon
24 them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain
of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt

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Assyria's tributaries. **20.** *Thou sayest (but* they are but *vain words)*] Some have taken the words in the parenthesis as the object of the verb, so that the sense would be, 'Thou speakest only vain words (when thou talkest about) counsel and strength.' But it is better to leave them as a parenthesis, because of the succeeding question, 'Thou speakest of counsel and strength, whence are they to come?' **21.** *Thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed*] Rab-shakeh answers his own question. It may be that he also is correct in saying that Hezekiah had hopes of help from Egypt. *Pharaoh king of Egypt*] Pharaoh is here used as the common title of the native kings of Egypt. **22.** *We trust in the Lord our God*] Probably Rab-shakeh knew something about the character of Egypt and her ability and likeliness to help. But now he enters on a matter which he does not understand. He had heard no doubt of the many altars and high places which Hezekiah had swept away in the beginning of his reign. But he did not, probably could not, comprehend that the law of Jehovah had long before ordained that when His worship should be brought to its true form among His people, there should be only one temple for the whole land. Hence his argument is, 'How can you expect Jehovah to help you, when you have been breaking down His shrines and limiting His worship to a single spot?' **23.** *Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord*] R.V. **my master.** Having ridiculed any trust in Egypt, and expressed his opinion that Hezekiah could not expect help from Jehovah, after demolishing all the altars in the land, Rab-shakeh comes to his third argument. This is, 'You have no forces to resist us.' He puts this into the form of a taunt. And the taunt is equivalent to saying, 'You dare not undertake to find two thousand riders, if I offer you the horses for them. If you dare, then do it. The horses are ready; I challenge you to provide the men.' *I will deliver*] R.V. **give.** The insult is made the greater by this proud way of expressing superiority. **24.** *How then wilt thou*, &c.] Rab-shakeh impudently takes for granted that Hezekiah's only answer

for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without 25
the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to
me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and 26
Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants
in the Syrian language; for we understand *it:* and talk not
with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that *are*
on the wall. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master 27
sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words?
hath he not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that *they*
may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?
Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the 28
Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great
king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Heze- 29
kiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of
his hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, 30
saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not
be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken 31
not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make *an*

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would be, 'I have not the men.' So he proceeds with his insults, and points out what he deems the folly of resistance. 'We, three of the principal officers of our master, are come to treat with you. As your power is so feeble, you ought not to think of opposition, but to listen to the Assyrian proposals if they were brought even by some inferior person.' **25.** *Am I now come up without the Lord*] Rab-shakeh goes one step further, and with a bold assertion claims Jehovah's support. Perhaps he thought his lie would receive some credence because he had already been able to reduce the towns all round Jerusalem.

26. *Speak, I pray thee...in the Syrian language*] The language intended is more properly named 'Aramæan.' This was the language of Mesopotamia and Babylon. The original word is the same as in the previous clause. By their request Eliakim and his companions at once put themselves at Rabshakeh's mercy, and he shewed them none. *the people that* are *on the wall*] There had gathered a crowd around Hezekiah's ministers to hear the issue of the conference, and these from their previous sufferings in the siege would be ready enough to put a favourable construction on Rab-shakeh's argument. **28.** *with a loud voice*] To prove that it was to the people on the wall that his message was sent. If he could provoke them to desert their king, Jerusalem would soon be in the power of the Assyrians. **29.** *out of his hand*] The natural expression would be 'out of *my* hand.' **30.** *this city shall not be delivered*] R.V. **given**. The Hebrew word is not the same as that rendered 'deliver' in this verse and the previous one. **31.** *Make* an agreement *with me* by *a present*] R.V. **make your peace with me**. The noun is that which is often rendered 'blessing' in the sense of a 'present' (see note on v. 15 above). And there is no example in the Bible exactly parallel to

agreement with me *by* a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree,
32 and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD
33 will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered
34 at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out
35 of mine hand? Who *are they* among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that
36 the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? But

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this. But the cognate verb is used of salutations (e.g. iv. 29), 'If any man *salute* thee,' literally 'wish thee peace.' Hence it is not difficult to see how such a noun would come to have the sense of 'peace.' *and come out to me*] i.e. Open your gates and submit yourselves instead of staying within to die of starvation.

and then [R.V. omits then] *eat ye every man* [R.V. **one**] *of his own vine*] Cf. 1 Kings iv. 25. *cistern*] This was a pit or well dug for collecting water. **32.** *until I come and take you*] Submission was to be followed, as was usual with Assyria, by deportation, but the people are promised a land as good as their own. *and not die*] Again he refers, as an argument likely to be most powerful, to the famine which was imminent if the siege continued. **33.** *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all*] R.V. **ever delivered**. So that it is clear that Rab-shakeh counted Jehovah as but one among the many local deities which were supposed specially to belong to one city or one country. **34.** *gods of Hamath, and of Arpad*] Of *Hamath*, see above on xvii. 24. *Arpad* is always spoken of in connexion with Hamath, but the site of the place has not been determined, nor any trace of the name found except in the Bible (2 Kings xix. 13); Jerem. xlix. 23; Is. x. 9; xxxvi. 19; xxxvii. 13). *the gods of Sepharvaim*] See above on xvii. 31. *Hena*] From the combination of the gods of Sepharvaim with those of the other two places here mentioned we should gather that the worship in all three was the same. This gives support to the conjecture which identifies Hena with *Ana*, a city not far from Sepharvaim.

and Irah] R.V. **Ivvah**. This place is supposed to be the same with *Ava* (R.V. **Avvah**) in xvii. 24 above, where see note. *have they delivered Samaria*] Among the gods of the countries the gods of Samaria have been in Rab-shakeh's thoughts, though he has not expressly spoken of them. But here, as if he had done so, he asks: Have they delivered Samaria? **35.** *that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem*] Rab-shakeh should have had a better memory. In verse 25 he said he had the Lord's command to destroy Jerusalem; but here, forgetful, he speaks of the same Lord

the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then 37
came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he 19
rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went *into* the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, which *was* 2
over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Esai the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This 3
day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words 4
of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which

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as one who might be expected to defend it. **36.** *the people held their peace*] Rab-shakeh had hoped to excite the people, at all events, to some expression of discontent. But the expectation is utterly disappointed, even the fear of starvation provokes no treachery. The Chronicler, though his account is briefer, yet describes in more terrible terms the blasphemies of the Assyrian envoy. **37.** *with* their *clothes rent*] See note on Chap. v. 7.

XIX. **1.** *Hezekiah...covered himself with sackcloth*] No doubt the words which his messengers reported were such as to tell upon the king, especially that saying of Rab-shakeh, 'The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it.' So while he himself falls to humiliation and prayer, going for that purpose into the house of the Lord, he sends his servants to inquire of Isaiah what hope there is amid the terrible attack which may very soon be upon them. **2.** *he sent...to Esai*] R.V. **Isaiah.** The historian has up to this time never mentioned the name of the great prophet. But we may be sure that one so endowed with insight into the divine will had been taken at once into the councils of Hezekiah. It may well be that Isaiah had advised the struggle for freedom which Hezekiah undertook. Hence when the days are darkest, it is to Isaiah he sends as the source of true light. **3.** *This day* is *a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy*] R.V. **contumely.** The words refer to the condition of Hezekiah and his people. Without help from God, and with no hope from men, their conceptions of freedom and liberty were likely all to prove abortive, and come to no result. The figure which the king employs indicates that they were in the extremest danger, and had no power to save themselves. **4.** *It may be*] The Hebrew word introduces expressions of uncertainty but yet of hope. Cf. Numb. xxiii. 3 and Josh. xiv. 12. Hezekiah is sending to the only source of hope. *and will reprove* [R.V. **rebuke**] *the words*] The ground on which Hezekiah pleads that God should

the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for
5 the remnant that are left. So the servants of king Hezekiah
6 came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say
to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words
which thou hast heard, *with* which the servants of the king of
7 Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon
him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own
land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.
8 So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria war-
ring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed
9 from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of
Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent
10 messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak
to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom

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interpose is that in what they suffer God's name and honour are blasphemed. *wherefore lift up* thy *prayer for the remnant that are* [R.V. **is**] *left*] The cities round about had been for the most part reduced by Sennacherib's army. The feeble remnant is Jerusalem and its people. For these Hezekiah entreats Isaiah to intercede. **6.** *Be not afraid of the words which* [R.V. **that**] *thou hast heard*, with *which* [R.V. **wherewith**] &c.] As in Isaiah. God's prophet sets down the threats and insults of Rab-shakeh as 'words' and no more. There is a degree of contempt in the whole sentence. **7.** *Behold, I will send a blast upon him*] R.V. **put a spirit in him.** The true sense of the verse is represented in R.V. God would give to Sennacherib and his soldiers such an inward motion or impulse that the news which should be brought to them should alarm them and drive them away. *and he shall hear a rumour*] Probably refers to the report about the Ethiopian king, Tirhakah, spoken of presently, in verse 9 as on the march to meet Sennacherib. *and shall return to his own land*] See below verse 36. *I will cause him to fall*] Though the whole manner of God's intervention be not made known, enough is laid open to shew us that to the boastful Sennacherib God had already fixed his day.

8. *So Rab-shakeh returned*] i.e. southward, towards Lachish, but during his absence Sennacherib had undertaken to attack Libnah, and there Rab-shakeh found him. *Libnah*] See above on viii. 22. Libnah was almost in a direct line eastward from Lachish.

9. *And when he heard say of Tirhakah*] Tirhakah was the third and last king of the xxvth dynasty, which was Ethiopian. The news of Tirhakah's advance caused Sennacherib to feel the importance of getting Jerusalem into his possession, seeing it was so much stronger than any position which he yet had. It had been a fortress of considerable importance in the time of the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6), and in the intervening period between David and Hezekiah its defences had been made much more complete.

he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah] This time they were the bearers of a letter (see below, verse 14) to the king. **10.** *Let*

thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast 11
heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have 12
the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar? Where *is* the king of Ha- 13
math, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, *of* Hena, and Ivah?

And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the mes- 14
sengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up *into* the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed 15
before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest

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not thy God...deceive thee] This was the sort of railing on the God of Israel, and the speaking against Him on which the Chronicler dwells so strongly. *Jerusalem shall not be delivered*] R.V. **given**. The change brings this passage into conformity with Isaiah. **11.** *by destroying them utterly*] The verb implies 'dooming,' 'devoting as if to a curse.' **12.** as *Gozan*] See above xvii. 6 note. *and Haran*] The town of Haran [still called *Harran*] is in the midst of the district which lies under Mt. Masius between the Khabour and the Euphrates.

and Rezeph] This name is found in several places in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, where from the situation of the other cities mentioned with it, this Rezeph most likely was situated. *the children of Eden which* were *in Thelasar*] R.V. **Telassar**. Of the position of this *Eden* it is impossible to say more than that it was probably somewhere in the north-west of Mesopotamia, whither Assyrian conquest had spread in the times just preceding Sennacherib, and to which he would intend now to call attention. **13.** *Where* is *the king of Hamath*] On all the places named here, see above in the notes on xvii. 34.

14. *Hezekiah received the letter*] Though bringing a written document the messengers of Sennacherib may be supposed to have also enforced their message by words of their own. *went up* into [R.V. **unto**] *the house of the Lord*] It is not likely that the king entered the Temple. It is more reasonable to suppose that standing at the porch he made his prayer towards the Holy of Holies to which he alludes. *spread it before the Lord*] We are not to think of this act as intended by the king to exhibit the letter for the divine inspection. It was rather done that the object being present to his own sight, his prayer might be prompted thereby and rendered more fervent. **15.** *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord*] The Chronicler says, 'Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.' *O Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel, which dwellest* between *the cherubims*] R.V. **which sittest upon the cherubim**. On the cherubim and their position above the ark, as the place where the divine presence was manifested and dwelt, see note on 1 Kings vi. 23. *thou* art *the God*, even *thou alone, of*

between the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all
the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.
16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes,
and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent
17 him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings
18 of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, and
have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but
the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have
19 destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech
thee, save *thou* us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the
earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.
20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus
saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to
21 me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This *is*
the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him;

The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and*
laughed thee to scorn;

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all the kingdoms of the earth] Sennacherib's letter had spoken of 'the gods of the nations.' Hezekiah contrasts his own faith in Jehovah with the false opinions of the heathen whose lands Sennacherib had overrun. **16.** *Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear*] R.V. **Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear.** The king can only speak in the figures which men would use to one another, but in this application of human attributes to the Almighty there need not be of necessity any misconception. *which hath sent him* [R.V. **wherewith he hath sent**] *to reproach the living God*] Literally the Hebrew would be translated 'which he hath sent it,' and that is their way of saying, 'wherewith he hath sent.'

Hezekiah calls Jehovah 'the living God' as opposed to the idols of wood and stone spoken of in Sennacherib's letter. **17.** *the kings of Assyria have destroyed* [R.V. **laid waste**] *the nations*] The Hebrew word translated 'destroyed' in the next verse is different from this. **18.** *have cast their gods into the fire*] A conquering heathen would shew his contempt for the nations which he overcame by destroying the objects of their worship, thus practically telling the vanquished that his gods were superior to theirs. **19.** *Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save* thou *us*] There is no Hebrew in Isaiah for 'I beseech thee.'

that all the kingdoms of the earth may know] It is remarkable how the loftiest souls among the Jews felt that their nation was meant to be God's witness to the rest of the world. Such sentiments are found not seldom in the prophecies and psalms. Cf. also 1 Sam. xviii. 46 and the marginal references there.

20. *the Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel*] The LXX. represents here 'the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel,' a very suitable expression at such a crisis but not in the Hebrew either here or in Isaiah. That *which* [R.V. **whereas**] *thou hast prayed to me*] This change is in conformity with Isaiah. But in the Hebrew there, the words 'I have heard' are not represented.

21. *The virgin the* [R.V. omits *the*] *daughter of Zion hath*

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? 22
And against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice,
And lift up thine eyes on high?
Even against the Holy One of Israel.
By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast 23
said,
With the multitude of my chariots I am come up
To the height of the mountains, *to* the sides of Lebanon,
And will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the
choice fir trees thereof:
And I will enter *into* the lodgings of his borders, *and into*
the forest of his Carmel.

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despised thee] The first part of the prophetic word is addressed to Sennacherib. Jerusalem is called 'daughter of Sion' because her inhabitants may be counted poetically as the offspring of Sion. She is also called 'virgin' because hitherto, since David's time, the city had never been conquered. And by opening the prophecy with this word it seems to be foretold that it shall still be saved from conquest. *The daughter of Jerusalem*] i.e. The people dwelling in the city. *hath shaken her head at thee*] This was a gesture of scorn. **22.** *and lift* [R.V. **lifted**] *up thine eyes on high*] The name by which Jehovah is often called is 'the Most High' (cf. Ps. lvi. 2). To utter reproaches and blasphemies against Him betrays a great uplifting of the eyes, a terrible excess of arrogancy. *the Holy One of Israel*] This title of God, which occurs very frequently in Isaiah, signifies not only that God Himself is holy and specially gracious unto Israel, but that He makes the people holy also. It expresses both the praise of God, and the privilege of His people. **23.** *By thy messengers*] Rab-shakeh and his companions. *With the multitude of my chariots*] Another reading is represented on the margin of the R.V. thus, 'With the driving of my chariots.' This by some is preferred as being more unusual and therefore perhaps better suited to a poetical passage like the present. to *the sides* [R.V. **innermost parts**] *of Lebanon*] The word which A.V. translates 'sides' is very frequently applied to the interior, as of a house (Amos vi. 10), or a ship (Jon. i. 5), or a cave (1 Sam. xxiv. 4), or a grave (Is. xiv. 15). And so here it indicates the interior recesses of Lebanon, whither as conqueror Sennacherib expects to penetrate. *and will* [R.V. **I will**] *cut down the tall cedar trees* [R.V. **cedars**] *thereof*] Both the changes are to the form in Isaiah. The beauty of the Lebanon was in its glorious trees.

the lodgings of his borders] R.V. **his farthest lodging-places.** The words express the intention of the Assyrian to leave no place in the whole land of Judah unravaged, however remote it might be.

and into *the forest of his Carmel*] R.V. **the forest of his fruitful field.** R.V. also omits the italics. *Carmel* though often used as a proper name to designate that beautiful and fertile

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters,
And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged *places*.
25 Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it,
And of ancient times that I have formed it?
Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste
Fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.
26 Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb,
As the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up.

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promontory which stretches out to the Mediterranean on the border of the tribe of Asher, yet as a common noun signifies a fruitful garden-like field. **24.** *I have digged and drunk strange waters*] Sennacherib means to say: 'Do what you may I am able by digging wells wherever I go to get water for my host, even where none had been found before.' This is most likely the sense of 'strange,' which word does not appear in the corresponding verse of Isaiah. *And with the sole of my feet have I dried*] [R.V. **will I dry**] *up all the rivers of besieged* places] R.V. **of Egypt**. This is a boast of the opposite nature. In Judæa the trouble might be that there was too little water. In Egypt there would be too much. But as in the former case the Assyrian could surmount all difficulties, so he had but to march into Egypt, and at his approach the Nile should be dried up and make a way for his troops to pass. The word translated 'rivers' is the Heb. 'Yeor' and is a proper name of the Nile. It is translated 'Nile' in R.V. of Is. xix. 7, three times over. Also the word rendered 'besieged places' is the Hebrew 'Mazor,' another form for 'Mizraim,' the common word for 'Egypt'; 'Mazor' is translated 'Egypt' in R.V. both here and in Is. xix. 6, and Micah vii. 12. **25.** This verse and the three following contain Jehovah's response to Sennacherib. *Hast thou not heard long ago* how *I have done it*] The fame of God's protection and leading of Israel might be expected to have penetrated to other nations.

And *of ancient times that I have formed it*] R.V. **and formed it of ancient times**. *Now have I brought it to pass*] It was ordained long ago, and now I have permitted it to become a fact. With the whole of these four verses may be compared the Lord's address to the Assyrian (Is. x. 9—19). There that nation is described as the 'rod of God's anger.' It is God that sends him and gives him his charge to take spoil and prey.

26. *Therefore*] i.e. Not, as thou thinkest, because of thy might, but because I sent thee; for this reason it is that the people against whom thou camest were dismayed. *of small power*] Literally, as in the margin 'short of hand.' *They were* as *the grass of the field*] All these figures of frailty are found in other

But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, 27
And thy rage against me.
Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, 28
Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips,
And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.
And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, 29
Ye shall eat *this* year such things as grow of themselves,
And in the second year that which springeth of the same;
And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.
And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah 30
Shall *yet* again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, 31
And they that escape out of mount Zion:

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places of Scripture. **27.** *But I know thy abode*] R.V. **sitting down**. The verse expresses to the full, but with wonderful conciseness, how God has observed and is observing every action of Sennacherib. **28.** *is come up into mine ears*] So the cry of Sodom is said (Gen. xviii. 21) to *come up* unto God, and grieve Him. See also Jas. v. 4. The R.V. renders the first part of the verse, **Because of thy raging against me, and for that thine arrogance is come up**, &c. *I will put my hook in thy nose*] The Assyrian is but as a wild beast let forth and permitted to do harm, but he is to be caught and reduced to subjection again, now that the time has come to put an end to his work. *by the way by which thou camest*] Answering the boast that Sennacherib would go on till he had conquered Egypt.

29. *And this* shall be *a* [R.V. **the**] *sign unto thee*] The next portion of the oracle is addressed to Hezekiah. On the giving of a sign to mark the certainty of a prophecy, cf. Is. vii. 11—14.

Ye shall eat this *year such things as grow of themselves*] R.V. **that which groweth of itself**. The meaning of the sign appears to be this. Sennacherib was to be driven away from Jerusalem, yet though the land had been overrun by the enemy, and the people of Jerusalem had been shut up within the walls, they should find enough produce from what had been shed on the ground in the previous harvest-time to serve them for the first year. In the next year they should be supplied in the same way, so that they could rest from the labours of the field, and both they and their lands enjoy a sabbatical year. Then in the third year they should commence undisturbedly their agricultural work, and enjoy their crops in peace. **30.** *The remnant...shall* yet *again take root*] Just as in the case of their crops, so shall it be with the people. God shall preserve a remnant, as He was doing in the shed grain of the harvest, and these shall once more grow up, in spite of their present low estate. **31.** *And they that escape*

The zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.
32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it *with* shield,
Nor cast a bank against it.
33 By the way that he came, *by the same* shall he return,
And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
34 For I will defend this city, to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the
36 morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at
37 Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping *in* the

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out of mount Zion] R.V. **And out of mount Zion they that shall escape.** **32.** *He shall not come into* [R.V. **unto**] *this city*] The R.V. renders the preposition correctly, and makes the same change in the next verse. We have no mention of Sennacherib's personal approach nearer than Libnah. *Nor* [R.V. **neither shall he**] *come*] The change relieves the verse from the monotony of several clauses commencing in exactly the same way.

Nor cast a bank [R.V. **mount**] *against it*] 'Mount' is the correct term for an embankment thrown up for the purposes of a siege.

33. *By the way that he came*] Cf. above verse 28, and the fulfilment in verse 36. **34.** *For mine own sake*] God's mercy and love to Israel were manifested that in them He might have witness to all the world. Hence the Psalmist often celebrates these qualities, and adds that they were shewn by Jehovah 'for His name's sake.' **35.** *And it came to pass that night*] For this the record in Isaiah has only 'Then.' It would appear from the history that the destruction of his army took place before Sennacherib himself could have reached Jerusalem. *the angel of the Lord went out*] R.V. **went forth.** In 2 Chron. xxxii. 21 the record is, 'The Lord sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land.' *and when they* [R.V. **men**] *arose early*] The number of the slain (185,000) was exceeding great. **36.** *and dwelt at Nineveh*] Apparently, and very naturally, deterred from any of his grander schemes by the terrible calamity which had befallen him, Sennacherib went to his own capital. **37.** in *the house of Nisroch*] Of Nisroch we have no information except this passage. Probably the name is incorrect, either because the Jews did not learn it correctly, or connected it with a false etymology. Josephus (*Ant.* x. 1, 5) says Sennacherib was murdered 'in his own temple Arasce,' which looks as if he had had some different name before

house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer *his sons* smote him with the sword: and they escaped *into* the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the pro- 20
phet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou

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him. *Adrammelech and Sharezer* his sons] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 21) says, 'they that came forth of his own bowels slew him with the sword.' into *the land of Armenia*] R.V. **Ararat**. The change is in accordance with the Hebrew text. But the interpretation of Ararat as Armenia is found in the Vulgate of Gen. viii. 4, where 'upon the mountains of Ararat' is represented by *super montes Armeniæ*. *Esarhaddon*] According to the Assyrian canon this king came to the throne in B.C. 681, and reigned till 668. In consequence of disaffection in Babylonia, he united it to the Assyrian kingdom and was the first (and only) Assyrian who had two capital cities. For he resided now in Nineveh and now in Babylon.

XX. **1.** *In those days was Hezekiah sick*] Scripture writers are not precise in specifying times, and 'in those days' may mean no more than 'about that time,' either before or after the defeat of the Assyrians. But there are one or two marks which may help us to come to a conclusion. In verse 6 the promise is made, 'I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria.' But these words seem to relate rather to a further continued preservation than to the overthrow which drove Sennacherib away. Though the Assyrians were gone, it was not unlikely that they would return. It is to deliverance from all such future attacks that God's promise is best referred. For the visit of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon was 'at that time' (verse 12), clearly when Hezekiah had recovered, and when time enough had elapsed for the news about the sickness and the recovery to have reached Babylon. But the embassy was not merely for the purposes of congratulation, but to secure Hezekiah's alliance with Babylon against Assyria. The time would seem to the Babylonians most opportune for shaking off the Assyrian yoke, and the help of that power, in attacking which the Assyrians had suffered so much loss, would appear the very best help that could be sought. Hence Berodach-baladan availed himself of the excuse of congratulating Hezekiah on his recovery to send an embassy to sound the king of Judah on the subject of an alliance. Hezekiah's answer was given by the exhibition of his supplies and stores of armour. Connecting the events together thus, we come to the conclusion that Hezekiah's sickness occurred soon after the Assyrian overthrow, and that thus the notes of time which fix (xviii. 13) Sennacherib's invasion in the *fourteenth* year of Hezekiah's reign and promise the king *fifteen* years more of life are substantially exact, and fill up together the *twenty-nine* years assigned to Hezekiah's reign in xviii. 2. *And the prophet Isaiah* [R.V. **Isaiah the prophet**] *the son of Amoz*] *Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die,*

2 shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall,
3 and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD,
remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and
with a perfect heart, and have done *that* which *is* good in thy
4 sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore
Isaiah was gone out *into* the middle court, that the word of the
5 LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the
captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David
thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears:
behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up *unto*
6 the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen
years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of
the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own
7 sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take
a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he
8 recovered. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the

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and not live] One can hardly read these words without the conviction that the conduct of Hezekiah, after his deliverance from the Assyrian siege, had not been such as to find favour with God.

2. *Then he turned his face to the wall*] He was in deep sorrow, and would pray without being observed. **3.** *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now*] R.V. **Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee.** As in Isaiah. **4.** into *the middle court*] R.V. **middle part of the city**. The variation from Isaiah is due to a difference of reading. The city of Jerusalem was built on two hills, the western of which was more than a hundred feet higher than the eastern. The expression in the text would apply exactly to the portion lying between these two. **5.** *tell* [R.V. **say to**] *Hezekiah the captain* [R.V. **prince**] *of my people*] The first of these changes is in conformity with Isaiah. The name 'prince' is that which was applied by Jehovah Himself to the first elected king of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 16), Saul. *behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up* unto *the house of the Lord*] These words are not found in Isaiah. But there is given there the thanksgiving of Hezekiah which expresses the feelings with which the king would go up to the Temple to acknowledge the goodness which had spared his life. **6.** *fifteen years*] See above on verse 1. *I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria*] Some stress has been laid on these words as though they necessarily implied that Jerusalem was still besieged. There is no reason why the words should not refer to the continued protection which Hezekiah and his city enjoyed afterwards when Sennacherib had been driven away. **7.** *Take a lump* [R.V. **cake**] *of figs*] Except here and in Isaiah xxxviii. 'cake' is the constant rendering of A.V. for this word. The figs were closely pressed together for better keeping when they were dried, just as we find is done at the present time. **8.** *What* shall be *the sign*] The king would have some token at once that the promise made to him should come to pass, and though the time was but very brief to wait, yet his

sign that the LORD will heal me, and *that* I shall go up *into* the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This 9
sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is 10
a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the 11
prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of 12

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request is granted. **9.** *shall the shadow go forward ten degrees* [R.V. **steps**], *or go back ten degrees*] R.V. **steps.** The clause, if it stood alone, would be translated, 'The shadow hath gone forward ten steps, (what) if it shall go back ten steps?' But Hezekiah's answer implies that an alternative question was asked. Thus both A.V. and R.V. have translated it. **10.** *It is a light thing for the shadow to go down* [R.V. **decline**] *ten degrees*] R.V. **steps.** The king's meaning is that it appears more natural and therefore easier, for the shadow to make a sudden advance in the direction in which it has been already going than to turn in the contrary way. *let the shadow return backward ten degrees*] R.V. **steps**. Thus reversing the order of nature. **11.** *And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord*] In Isaiah the whole is put into the form of a direct message from God, 'Behold I will bring again' &c. *he brought the shadow ten degrees* [R.V. **steps**] *backward*] The statement in Isaiah is not made concerning the shadow, but the sun. 'So the sun returned ten degrees' (R.V. **steps**). *in* [R.V. **on**] *the dial of Ahaz*] As will be seen from the margin of R.V., the word here rendered 'dial' is the same which in the previous verses the Revisers have translated 'steps.' Also wherever the word is used elsewhere, and it is not of rare occurrence, it always refers to steps or stairs. It seems therefore best to consider that the contrivance by which the time of day was marked in this case was something which could be called a staircase' or 'steps.' We must think too of the sign as given to Hezekiah while he lay upon what had been till a short space before the bed of sickness and expected death. We must therefore conclude that the contrivance, whatever it was, must have been one which the king could see from his chamber. Probably it would be in the court of the palace, and there it might take the form of a staircase-like erection, with a projecting shaft, so contrived that the shadow thrown by it should fall along the steps and grow shorter or longer as the sun rose or fell in the heavens. With regard to the length of time which is indicated by the word 'step' we have nothing to guide us. Of the speculations how the miracle was brought to pass none can be expected to be satisfactory. And we should bear with us, on such matters, Job's question (xi. 7) 'Canst thou by searching find out God?'

12. *Berodach-baladan*] The first part of the name is given as

Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had
13 heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor
14 in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country,
15 *even* from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in

Merodach in Isaiah. This king of Babylon is mentioned in the Assyrian inscription, as overthrown by Sargon the father of Sennacherib. *and a present*] A present intended to procure alliance and aid. *for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick*] And probably had heard also of the wondrous sign which attended on his recovery. Whether the announcement of such a marvel would create special interest in Babylon the land of star-worship and star-study we can only conjecture. No doubt the congratulation on Hezekiah's recovery was only used as a pretext for an embassy which should gain over Judah, if possible, to the side of Babylon. **13.** *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them*] In Isaiah we read he 'was glad of them.' *and shewed them all the house of his precious things*] On the margin both A.V. and R.V. give 'spicery' instead of 'precious things;' and the word (with a very slight difference of form) is used in that sense in Gen. xxxvii. 25; xliii. 11. But here as the house seems to have contained the various things which follow after, silver and gold as well as spices, perhaps the more general rendering is to be preferred. The storehouse which at first had its name from the aromatic treasures bestowed there, came in time to be used, without change of name, for the keeping of other things that were valuable. *precious ointment*] R.V. **oil.** This is the more usual rendering. The stores would be of pure oil more likely than of manufactured ointment. *and all the house of his armour*] R.V. omits 'all,' which is not in the Hebrew text here, though it is in Isaiah. The house of armour was no doubt 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' which Solomon built as an armoury, see notes on 1 Kings vii. 2; x. 17. *nothing...that Hezekiah shewed them not*] He was clearly desirous to produce an impression of his wealth and consequent power. This proud spirit the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 25) describes thus, 'Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem.'

14. *What said these men?*] Hezekiah does not answer this question. To tell of the proposals which had been made to him by the Babylonians, and of the remarks which had been called forth in praise of all that he had shewn them, would have provoked some reproach from God's prophet, who was probably averse to any alliance with foreign and idolatrous powers. even *from*

thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. And Isaiah said unto 16
Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, 17
that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried unto Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall 18
issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take *away;* and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD 19
which thou hast spoken. And he said, *Is it* not *good,* if peace and truth be in my days? And the rest of the acts of Heze- 20
kiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a con-

Babylon] Except as one of the places whence colonists were brought to occupy Samaria (xvii. 24), Babylon has not before come into Jewish history. Soon it begins to figure largely, especially in the writings of the prophets, and at last becomes the victor of Jerusalem, and the scene of the long captivity of the two tribes.

15. *All* the things *that* are *in mine house*] R.V. **all that is in mine house.** **17.** *nothing shall be left*] Though some few Jews remained behind among the ruins of the desolated city, nothing worth taking as booty was left behind. **18.** *thy sons... shall they take* away] This came to pass in the case of Manasseh, Hezekiah's own son (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), who was carried as a prisoner to Babylon. *in the palace of the king of Babylon*] Examples of Jews chosen for menial duties in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon are found in Dan. i. 6. **19.** *Good* is *the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*] Bp Hall takes these words of Hezekiah as uttered in a proper spirit. 'The rod was smart, yet good Hezekiah kisses it.' Some however have thought that the sentiment of the next sentence is too full of selfishness to accord with such a perfect character. Is it *not* good [R.V. **so**], *if peace and truth be* [R.V. **shall be**] *in my days?*] These words are spoken, as it seems, after reflection on the previous utterance, and seem to breathe a spirit of thankfulness mainly for the peace and security promised during Hezekiah's own lifetime. That this would be granted is implied because the prophecy speaks only of the evils which should come upon his descendants. **20.** *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Hezekiah*] The Chronicler enlarges on Hezekiah's prosperity, 'The Lord guided [the king and his people] on every side. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.' *all his might*] He seems among other things to have had much cattle, which was one of the chief forms of wealth in those days. *he made a* [R.V. **the**] *pool, and a* [R.V. **the**] *conduit*] What Hezekiah did is more definitely described by the Chronicler. 'He stopped,' it is said, 'the upper water course of Gihon.' By this is most likely meant what the king did before the

duit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in
21 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

21 Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he *began* to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
2 name *was* Hephzi-bah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom
3 the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. For he built *up* again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of
4 heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of

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invasion of Sennacherib. In some way, by covering over, or diverting, he conveyed the waters of this spring into the city, and made a pool or reservoir to hold a supply for the city at a much lower level, in the valley between the two hills on which Jerusalem was mainly built. *in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah*] The sources of Hezekiah's history are called in 2 Chronicles 'the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, *and* the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.' How far these are identical with what is meant by the verse before us is not clear. But from the history which is produced in the prophecy of Isaiah, we feel sure that there cannot have been much difference in the sources whence the accounts were derived. **21.** *Hezekiah slept with his fathers*] The Chronicler adds 'and they buried him in the chiefest (R.V. **the ascent**) of the sepulchres of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death.'

XXI. **1.** *fifty and five years*] A reign longer than his father's whole life, in spite of the addition of fifteen years; and longer than the reign of any other king of Judah or Israel. *Hephzi-bah*] The mother's name is the name which Isaiah (lxii. 4) gives to the restored Zion, 'my delight is in her.' **2.** *after the abominations of the heathen*] He followed all the idolatrous practices of the nations of Canaan. **3.** *For he built* up *again the high places*] The R.V. omits 'up.' On Hezekiah's destruction of the high places, see 2 Chron. xxx. 14; xxxi. 1. *and he reared up altars for Baal*] The Chronicler says for 'the Baalim,' by which is most likely intended the various aspects or attributes under which Baal was worshipped. *and made a grove*] R.V. **an Asherah**. On Asherah, which was probably a wooden image of a goddess so called, see note on 1 Kings xiv. 15 and 2 Kings xiii. 6. *Ahab king of Israel*] Who first, at the instigation of Jezebel his wife, introduced the worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel from Phœnicia. *worshipped all the host of heaven*] See note on xvii. 16. **4.** *he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which*] R.V. **whereof** &c. It seems most likely that the following verse explains what is meant by this. The altars were in the courts of the Temple, not within the Temple building. Azariah had

the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the 5
two courts of the house of the LORD. And he made his son 6
pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had 7
made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:
neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the 8
land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they 9
hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil

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intruded himself within the holy place (2 Chron. xxvi. 16). Even for his most solemn prayer Hezekiah prayed *toward* the sanctuary.

5. *the two courts of the house of the Lord*] On the two courts of the Temple, spoken of respectively as 'the inner' or 'higher' court, or 'the court of the priests,' and 'the great court' which must have enclosed the inner, see note on 1 Kings vi. 36. **6.** *And he made his son*] The Chronicler has the plural in the parallel passage, 'He caused his *children* to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.' *pass through the fire*] See note on xvi. 3. 'The valley of the son of Hinnom' mentioned by the Chronicler was a ravine on the south and west of Jerusalem, the south-east extremity of which had the name of *Tophet*. *and observed times*] R.V. **practised augury.** The rendering of A.V. is from the Vulgate, but that version in other places represents the sense as being 'to use augury.' *used enchantments*] The word is that which is used Num. xxiv. 1 of Balaam going 'to seek for enchantments.' *dealt with* [R.V. **with them that had**] *familiar spirits*] The Hebrew word translated 'one that hath a familiar spirit,' means originally 'a bottle.' It is applied first of all to the spirit supposed to reside within the persons so possessed; then to the person himself. After that because the answers were supposed to be derived from the spirits of the dead, it was applied to one called up from the dead. *wizards*] One who is supposed to be preternaturally *wise*. **7.** *a graven image of the grove*] R.V. **the graven image of Asherah.** Though usually of wood, such images were also made of silver and carved in stone. *the Lord said to David*] For the words to David cf. 2 Sam. vii. 13; and to Solomon 1 Kings viii. 20. **8.** *neither will I make* [R.V. **cause**] *the feet of Israel move*] R.V. **to wander**. The verb has the notion of a restless unsettled state. *only if*] R.V. **if only**. At the end of this clause there are not two sets of commands spoken of. 'That which I have commanded them' is only explained by 'the law that my servant Moses commanded them.' **9.** *Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than* &c.]

than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,
11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with
12 his idols: therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoso-
13 ever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a
14 dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and
15 a spoil to all their enemies; because they have done *that* which *was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.
16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin where*with* he made Judah to sin, in doing *that* which *was* evil

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R.V. **to do that which is evil more than**, &c. The R.V. represents the Hebrew more closely.

10. *the Lord spake*] The Chronicler says God's warnings were sent both to the king and to his people but they would not hearken.

11. *all that the Amorites*] The Amorites are put for the inhabitants of Canaan generally, though strictly the Amorites, with the Hittites and the Jebusites, were the mountaineer portion of the people, whilst the Canaanites dwelt by the sea and by the Jordan.

12. *I* am *bringing* [R.V. **I bring**] such *evil*] For the expression 'the ears shall tingle' cf. 1 Sam. iii. 11; Jer. xix. 3.

13. *the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab*] The figures are taken from the occupation of the builder. The builder employs line and plummet that he may carry out his work exactly according to the plan prescribed. But here the pattern is one of utter destruction, which God Himself threatens to carry out after the fashion of Samaria and the house of Ahab, which the previous generation had beheld utterly destroyed. *as* a man *wipeth a dish*] The description is of a thing that is done with, and will be used no more. 'To turn it upside down,' is literally 'to turn it upon the face thereof,' a rendering which brings out very completely the intention of using the dish no more. **14.** *And I will forsake* [R.V. **cast off**] *the remnant*] 'Forsake' need not necessarily imply 'a punishment that has been deserved.' Hence R.V. has substituted 'cast off' or 'reject' in many instances.

15. that *which* was [R.V. **is**] *evil*] As the words are God's the present is the more appropriate tense.

16. *Manasseh shed innocent blood very much*] This is alluded to again in xxiv. 4 as the cause of God's continued anger against Judah. *from one end to another*] Lit. 'from mouth to mouth.'

in the sight of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts of Ma- 17
nasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are*
they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried 18
in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and
Amon his son reigned in his stead.

Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he *began* to reign, 19
and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he 20
did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father
Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father 21
walked *in*, and served the idols that his father served, and wor-
shipped them: and he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and 22
walked not in the way of the LORD. And the servants of Amon 23
conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.
And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired 24
against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah
his son king in his stead. Now the rest of the acts of Amon 25
which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles

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See note on 2 Kings x. 21. **17.** *the rest of the acts of Manasseh*] The compiler of Kings says no word about Manasseh's repentance, which forms a considerable part of his history in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12—19). There we read that in his distress he besought the Lord, and the Lord heard him and brought him back out of Babylon. 'Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.' He also built parts of the walls of Jerusalem, and strengthened the cities of Judah. He took away the strange gods and built up the altar of the Lord. Mention is also made of his prayer, of which we have an apocryphal version preserved, and of the seers which spake unto him. **18.** *in the garden of his own house*] See note on xx. 21 above.

19. *Jotbah*] This place is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. It is generally thought to be the same as *Jotbath* or *Jotbathah*, mentioned (Num. xxxiii. 33; Deut. x. 7). **20.** *as his father Manasseh did*] We can see from the notice of Manasseh in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17 that his repentance did not undo all the evil he had brought into the nation. 'The people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the Lord their God only.' And on Amon, his son, the reformation of the father seems to have had no effect.

21. *served the idols that his father served*] i.e. Making again the same sort of graven images, which we must suppose Manasseh in his repentance had broken in pieces. **22.** *and he forsook the Lord God*] The Chronicler says 'Amon trespassed more and more.' **23.** *the servants of Amon conspired against him*] The servants must be the court officers who were close about the king. The people shewed their attachment to the house of David by immediately placing Amon's son, Josiah, on the throne.

and slew the king] R.V. **put the king to death.** The word is not the same as that translated 'slew' in the next verse.

26 of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

22 Josiah *was* eight years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
2 name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside *to* the
3 right hand or *to* the left. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, *to* the house of the LORD,

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26. *in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza*] See above, verse 18. This was evidently a new burial-place contrived for themselves by the kings, in close neighbourhood to the royal palace.

XXII. **1.** *Josiah* was *eight years old when he* began *to reign*] Called to the throne as such a mere child the new king must have been under some guardianship, and however good his natural desires may have been, he could hardly have commenced the great reforms which he brought about until he had been some time on the throne. *Boscath*] R.V. **Bozcath**. This latter is the form of the word in Josh. xv. 39, where it is mentioned between Lachish and Eglon among the cities of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. **3.** *And it came to pass in the eighteenth year*] The Chronicler gives two dates anterior to this for events in the course of Josiah's life. He says (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7, R.V.) 'In the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images...And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their ruins round about. And he brake down the altars, and beat the Asherim and the graven images into powder, and hewed down all the sun-images throughout all the land of Israel, and returned to Jerusalem.' It is clear that we have here a most comprehensive summary of the destruction of idolatry in the whole of Josiah's reign, and not what he began to do in his twelfth year. The Chronicler, however, having given us the date at which Josiah first manifested his disposition to destroy the idols out of the land, includes in the same sentence all that was done by the king in the after-part of his reign. *the king sent Shaphan...the scribe*] The event on which all else in Josiah's reformation seems to hinge is the restoration of the Temple. There it was that the book of the Law was discovered which stirred both king and people to attempt a thorough reformation. *Shaphan...the scribe*] Shaphan, whose father and grandfather are here mentioned, was the father of Ahikam mentioned below (verse 12) and of Gemariah (Jer. xxxvi. 10, 11, 12), and the grandfather of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14; xl. 5, 9, 11, &c.). The office of scribe in his time was clearly an important one. He is sent by the king to take oversight of the funds for the restoration of the Temple, and seems to have ranked with the governor of the city and the

saying, Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the 4
silver which is brought *into* the house of the LORD, which the
keepers of the door have gathered of the people: and let them 5
deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the
oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the
doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair
the breaches of the house, unto carpenters, and builders, and 6
masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.
Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money 7
that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, 8
I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.

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recorder. **4.** *Hilkiah the high priest*] From 1 Chron. vi. 13 it seems that he was the son of Shallum. *that he may sum the silver*] R.V. **money**. With a view to the restoration of the Temple, a collection of money like that in the reign of Joash (see above, chap. xii.) had been in progress, and now, acting on the precedent of that previous time, Josiah sets about the repair of all that had fallen into decay during the seven and fifty years which had passed since the death of Hezekiah. *the keepers of the door have gathered of the people*] The keepers of the door were the priests (see xii. 9) who had charge of the treasury into which the offerings of the devout were put. **5.** *into the hand of the doers of the work*] R.V. **of the workmen**. Two sets of people are here both called 'doers of the work' (R.V. **workmen**), first, those who have the oversight, and secondly, the actual artificers, carpenters, &c. The former received the money in gross, and paid it out for wages to the several classes of workmen.

6. *unto* [R.V. adds **the**] *carpenters, and* [R.V. **to the**] *builders, and* [R.V. **to the**] *masons*]. *and to buy* [R.V. **for buying**] *timber*] The contractors had to provide both materials and labour from the money which was put at their disposal. **7.** *no reckoning made with them*] Compare the almost exactly similar account in xii. 15. There is no doubt that over such labours the hearts of men are enlarged, and they work from love of what they are doing.

8. *I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord* Much discussion has arisen about the discovery which this verse records. Before entering on the question of what it was which Hilkiah found, it may be well to notice briefly the circumstances of the time. Josiah had succeeded his father at the age of eight, and in the previous fifty-seven years the kingdom had twice over been deluged with all the abominations of idolatry. The Temple had been neglected, perhaps closed, during a large part of these years. The holy place would have become foul with neglect, the doors shut up, the lamps unlit, no incense within, no sacrifices without the building. As for the book of the Law, whatever may have been its contents at this time, rolls containing it would certainly not be numerous. In the possession of the priests they might be

9 And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And
Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king
word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money
that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the
hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight *of* the
10 house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king,
saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And

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expected to be found, but only here and there. The copy made (according to the Law) for the use of the king would most certainly have perished. That an authoritative copy of the Law, whatever it may have comprised, would be supplied for preservation in the Temple we certainly might expect, but after nearly sixty years of neglect of the Temple and its services we can feel little surprise that neither Hilkiah nor his fellows were aware of its existence, and that Josiah knew concerning it only what had been taught him by the priests. The half-century previous to Josiah's accession had been a period of utter darkness both for people, priests and king. *Hilkiah gave* [R.V. **delivered**] *the book to Shaphan*] The scribe Shaphan was the person to whom such a discovered roll would naturally be brought. Neither Hilkiah nor Shaphan are surprised at what has been found. The high-priest describes it to Shaphan by a form of words which must have had a definite meaning before he used them. That is, there was known among the priests, and to some degree no doubt among the people, a collection of precepts which were called by the name of 'the book of the Law.' Therefore the *finding* mentioned in this verse was not a discovery of something unknown before, but the rescuing of the Temple-copy of the Law from the hiding-place in which it had long lain (perhaps in one of the chambers round about the Temple). Hilkiah knows what it is which he has come upon, the scribe with professional instinct begins to peruse it. Neither of them shews any ignorance or any surprise at the sight or perusal. **9.** *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king*] Shaphan, bearing the book with him (2 Chron. xxxiv. 16), comes and gives a calm account of the business on which he had been sent at first, viz. the inquiry and arrangement about the money which had been gathered. When that part of the business is despatched he tells the king concerning the book that has been discovered. *Thy servants have gathered* [R.V. **emptied out**] *the money*] What seems to be intended is, that Hilkiah and Shaphan had removed the offerings from the chest at the Temple, and had found out what sum was in hand for the work of restoration. *them that do the work* [R.V. **the workmen**], *that have the oversight*] The scribe and the priest pass on the money to the contractors. **10.** *Shaphan...shewed* [R.V. **told**] *the king*] 'shewed' is open to a wrong sense.

Hilkiah...hath delivered me a book] Though Shaphan is represented as speaking of *a* book, there can be no question that he knew what the book was. 'The book of the Law' had a well-defined meaning for him. How far the king understood what such a book contained is questionable. The sacrifices and other religious

Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when 11
the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he
rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, 12
and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the
king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the 13
people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book
that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled
against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the
words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and 14
Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the
prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of
Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem
in the college;) and they communed with her. And she said 15
unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man

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observances in which he had taken part he of course understood. It is manifest that there was in this book something more than he had known before, from his alarm when he heard it read.

And Shaphan read it] i.e. Portions of it. **11.** *he rent his clothes*] From what is said afterwards in verse 19 we can see that the portions which affected the king were such passages as Deut. xxviii. **12.** *Ahikam the son of Shaphan*] Ahikam was father of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14), and continued in an official position in the reign of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 24). Ahikam must have been a person of ripe years to be sent on such an errand as this to Huldah. Hence Shaphan his father must have been of an advanced age. *Achbor the son of Michaiah*] R.V. **Micaiah**. He is not mentioned except in this history. *Asahiah a servant of the king's*] R.V. **Asaiah the king's servant**. 'Servant' in such phrases signifies some person of influence in close attendance on the king. **13.** *our fathers have not hearkened*] The two reigns of Manasseh and Amon had led the whole people away to idolatry. **14.** *Huldah the prophetess*] Except Miriam the sister of Moses, who is called 'a prophetess' in Exod. xv. 20, and Deborah (Jud. iv. 4) in the days of the judges, Huldah is the only woman spoken of in the Old Testament as endowed with prophetic gifts. Of Huldah we know only what is told us in this history. She lived in Jerusalem, and her husband, Shallum, was probably a Levite, as he had charge of what must have been the wardrobe for the vestments of the priests. *keeper of the wardrobe*] See above on x. 22. There seems no doubt that the robes here alluded to are the robes of the priests. *in the college*] R.V. **in the second quarter**. The Hebrew word here rendered 'college' has always something to do with 'second' or 'double,' and in Zeph. i. 10 it clearly refers to a part of the city of Jerusalem, and A.V. there translates it by 'second' (R.V. second quarter). Probably it was some additional suburban portion of the city, which was known by this name. **15.** *Tell* [R.V. adds **ye** *the man that*

16 that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring
evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all
the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:
17 because they have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto
other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the
works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled
18 against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king
of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye
say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the
19 words which thou hast heard; because thine heart was tender,
and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou
heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inha-
bitants thereof, that *they* should become a desolation and a
curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have
20 heard *thee*, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather
thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy
grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which
I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word
again.

23 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders
2 of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up *into* the
house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inha-
bitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the pro-

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sent you to [R.V. **unto** *me*] At first she places king and people all on one level and denounces the woes that shall surely come upon the nation for their sins, on all alike. **16.** *all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read*] The Chronicler says, 'all *the curses* that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah.' The curses are such as those contained in Deut. xxviii. already alluded to, and in Lev. xxvi. 14—39.

17. *my wrath shall be kindled against this place and* [R.V. adds **it**] *shall not be quenched*] The king in verse 13 used the expression 'wrath of the Lord.' **18.** *But to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Judah*] A special message is sent to the king, because he had set about a reform as soon as he heard the words of the Law.

19. *thine heart was tender*] 'easily touched,' 'susceptible.'

and thou hast humbled [R.V. **didst humble**] *thyself*] For grace shewn to such humiliation even in a worse case cf. 1 Kings xxi. 29.

I also have heard thee] The sentence implies, 'Because thou didst hear me.' **20.** *into thy grave in peace*] i.e. None of these evils denounced against the nation shall come to pass in thy days. As far as they are concerned thou shalt die in peace.

XXIII. **1.** *And the king sent, and they gathered*] Compare the similar covenant-making in the reign of Joash (xi. 14—17). That was also followed by a destruction of the objects of idolatry.

2. *and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people*] These were the elders spoken of in the previous verse, the representative men of the principal classes from every part of the kingdom.

phets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood 3
by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. And the king 4
commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order; and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burnt them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them *unto* Beth-el. And he put down the 5
idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to

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small and great] i.e. the poor and the rich. *the book of the covenant*] The expression is found in Exod. xxiv. 7, and there seems to refer to the contents of the chapters Exod. xx.—xxiii. But there is little doubt that, however brief the first form of statutes may have been to which this name was given, it came in time to include the additional laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and that to some such expanded set of laws the name is here applied. **3.** *And the king stood by a* [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] See xi. 14. *to walk after the Lord* &c.] The words of the covenant are dictated by Deut. xiii. 4. *all* their [R.V. **his**] *heart and all* their [R.V. **his**] *soul*] This was the king's own solemn pledge.

to perform [R.V. **confirm**] *the words of this covenant*] 'Confirm' is the rendering of this verb in A.V. in a very similar passage (Deut. xxvii. 26). **4.** *priests of the second order*] i.e. Those who were next in rank to the high priest (cf. Jer. lii. 24). *the keepers of the door*] Who would be of the priests or Levites.

to bring forth...all the vessels that were made for Baal] We see therefore that the Baal worship had been fully established within the holy place. *and for the grove*] **the Asherah.** See note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. *in the fields of Kidron*] These were where the valley of the Kidron growing wider offered space for such a burning. *and carried the ashes of them* unto *Beth-el*] That the refuse of all these objects of idolatry might be cast away in the place whence the first step was taken which had led to idolatry among the people of the Lord. **5.** *the idolatrous priests*] The Hebrew has a special name (*Chemarim*) for these priests. In Hosea x. 5 the name is applied to the priests of the calves, and we may almost be certain that these were in dress made to look as much like those in the Temple at Jerusalem as possible. The only other place where the name is found is Zeph. i. 4, where the words also refer to this false worship in Judah. *whom the kings of Judah had ordained*] The use of *Chemarim* in Hosea x. 5 for the priests of the calves might lead to the supposition that the ordination here spoken of was an introduction of calf-worship into

burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burnt incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the
6 planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burnt it at the brook Kidron, and stampt *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves
7 of the children of the people. And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the
8 women wove hangings for the grove. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were in* the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which
9 *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the

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Judah. We have however no definite statement that this was ever done. **6.** *without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron*] So that nothing of the polluting idol might remain within the city.

upon the graves of the children of the people] R.V. **of the common people**. Those who could not afford to have graves cut out of the rocks and made secure by a stone at the entrance, were laid in the ground at some distance from the city. **7.** *And he brake down*] On like reforms cf. 1 Kings xv. 12; xxii. 46. *by* [R.V. **in**] *the house of the Lord*] There is no reason why the English should not represent the Hebrew plainly. *the women wove hangings for the grove*] R.V. **the Asherah**. It seems that at some of the shrines dedicated to the false gods, instead of more permanent erections, tents were put up, and it was for these that the women were employed in weaving curtains. **8.** *all the priests out of the cities of Judah*] These were the priests who had betaken themselves to the various high places throughout the land, and conducted the worship there (2 Chron. xxxiii. 17). These priests were brought to Jerusalem and were hereafter employed on lower duties as Levites. *from Geba to Beer-sheba*] That is, throughout all Judah just as 'from Dan to Beersheba' is used (Jud. xx. 1; 1 Sam. iii. 20) for the whole land of Canaan. *Geba* was in the northern border of the tribe of Benjamin. *the high places of the gates*] The open spaces kept about the gates of Oriental cities afforded exactly the site which would be chosen for some shrine of the popular worship. in [R.V. **at**] *the entering in*, &c.] As the English of both A.V. and R.V. stands, 'the gate of Joshua the governor of the city' must be the same which is called in the next clause, 'the gate of the city.' In that case, as the text speaks of 'high places,' we must understand that there was more than one 'high place' in the same neighbourhood.

9. *came not up to the altar of the Lord*] They had been ministers of the high places, which even if they were erected in the name of

LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the 10
valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given 11
to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burnt the chariots of the sun with fire. And the 12
altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high 13
places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites,

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the Lord, the God of Israel, were yet forbidden, and so these priests henceforth executed no sacrificial office at the Temple.

the unleavened bread] Mentioned as representing those gifts which, after being offered, were devoted to the maintenance of the priests. *among their brethren*] i.e. This whole class lived a life distinct from the other priests. **10.** *Topheth*] See note on xxi. 6, and on 'passing through the fire to Molech' see note on xvi. 3. **11.** *the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun*] When men began to adore the heavenly bodies, it was natural to dedicate a triumphal car to the sun-god and to keep splendid horses for use in the procession in his honour. Such had been provided in Judah during the days of Manasseh and Amon, and were still kept close to the entrance of the Temple court. *by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain*] It may be that he was in attendance on the horses of the sun.

which was *in the suburbs* [**precincts**] *and* [R.V. adds **he** *burnt*] The most accepted signification of the Hebrew word is 'an open portico' into which the chambers of the official persons opened.

12. *the altars that* were *on the top* [R.V. **roof** *of the upper chamber of Ahaz*] This chamber must also have been erected on some of the buildings (perhaps over a gateway), by which the Temple was encircled. It was evidently intended for the worship of the host of heaven. *did the king beat down* [R.V. **break**], *and brake* [R.V. **beat**] them *down from thence*] It will be seen from the margin both of A.V. and R.V. that the latter verb may also be rendered 'he ran,' and this, which is a very well-supported translation, expresses the haste and eagerness manifested to complete the work of destruction. **13.** *the mount of corruption*] This name was given to a portion of the Mount of Olives, because of the idolatrous temples which were erected there.

Ashtoreth] On *Ashtoreth*, *Chemosh* and *Milcom*, and the temples which Solomon built for them under the influence of his heathen

and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon,
14 did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut
down the groves, and filled their places *with* the bones of men.
15 Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, *and* the high place
which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,
had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down,
and burnt the high place, *and* stampt *it* small to powder, and
16 burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the
sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the
bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt *them* upon the altar,
and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the
17 man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he
said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city
told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came
from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done
18 against the altar of Beth-el. And he said, Let him alone; let
no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the

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wives, see the notes on 1 Kings xi. 4—8. **14.** *he brake in pieces the images* [R.V. **pillars**, *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherim**. From such passages as this we may conclude that the images of Asherah were generally of wood. *bones of men*] To the mind of a Jew, a place defiled in this manner could never again be used for any religious purpose.

the altar that was *at Beth-el*] i.e. which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had erected when the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 28, 29). Having purged his own kingdom from idolatry he now turns his thoughts to those Israelites who were left in the northern kingdom. *both* [R.V. **even**] *that altar and the high place*] The 'high place' means here, and often in other passages, 'the house of the high place,' which was some sort of chapel near to the spot where the altar stood. *and* [R.V. adds **he**] *burnt the high place.....and burnt the grove*] R.V. **Asherah**. Cf. verse 14. **16.** *Josiah turned himself*] i.e. To view the overthrow and to satisfy himself that all had been thoroughly destroyed. *he spied the sepulchres*] Not close by where the altar and the high place had stood, but on some other hill, which was visible from where the king was standing. *burnt* them *upon the altar, and polluted* [R.V. **defiled**] *it*] We have the verb translated 'defile' in verses 8, 10 and 13. *these words*] R.V. **things**. This is the translation in the very next verse.

17. *What title* [R.V. **monument**] is *that that* [R.V. **which**] *I see?*] The word is used in Ezek. xxxix. 15 for a 'sign' to mark a spot where lay some object needing notice. So that 'monument' appears the better rendering. *the sepulchre of the man of God*] The prophet of Beth-el who had deceived him brought the carcase of the dead man back to Beth-el and buried it (1 Kings xiii. 29—31) in what must at that time have been a general burial-ground.

18. *Let him alone*] R.V. **Let him be.** The verb translated 'let alone,' in a later clause of the verse is not the same as this,

bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. And all the 19
houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria,
which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the* LORD to anger,
Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts
that he had done in Beth-el. And he slew all the priests of the 20
high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burnt men's
bones upon them, and returned *to* Jerusalem.

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the 21
passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book
of this covenant. Surely there was not holden such a passover 22
from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor *in* all the
days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the 23
eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden
to the LORD in Jerusalem. Moreover the *workers with* familiar 24

that came out of Samaria] i.e. The prophet of Beth-el, for that place belonged to what was afterwards known as the kingdom of Samaria. The word 'Samaria' is used here in accordance with the language of Josiah's day. Samaria did not exist in Jeroboam's time, the city which ultimately gave name to the district having only been built in the reign of Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24).

19. *high places that* were *in the cities of Samaria*] It would seem from this that when the ten tribes had been carried away the king of Judah exercised some sort of authority over the people in the northern kingdom. **20.** *and burnt men's bones upon them* To the heathen, as well as to the Jew, this would be a pollution that would make the place for ever unfit for worship.

21. *Keep the passover*] The Chronicler gives elaborate details concerning the way in which this feast was kept. He also mentions by name the rulers of the house of God and the chief of the Levites, as though copying from a contemporary record to which others might refer as well as himself. *in the book of this covenant*] R.V. **in this book of the covenant**. The king desires that whatever may have come to be the manner of celebration from long usage, and the neglect which had been introduced through the sins of the kings, there should now be a precise observance of everything which the authoritative book, recently brought to light, required. **22.** *Surely there was not holden* [R.V. **kept**] *such a passover*] The king had said '*Keep* the passover.' **23.** *in the eighteenth year of king Josiah*, wherein [R.V. **was**] *this passover was holden*] R.V. **this passover kept**. There is no need for the italics of A.V. The writer wishes to say emphatically *when* this strict observance of the passover took place. The writer of the Kings has never mentioned the passover of Hezekiah, but it is noteworthy that the Chronicler, though he has given the account of Hezekiah's feast, yet, equally with the compiler of this book, says that no such passover as Josiah's had been held before since Samuel's days. This shews clearly that his meaning was that no passover-feast had gone so strictly according to the book of the covenant. **24.** *Moreover the* workers with

spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest
25 found *in* the house of the LORD. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.
26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, where*with* his anger was kindled against Judah,

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R.V. **them that had** *familiar spirits, and the wizards*] See note on xxi. 6. *and the images*] R.V. **the teraphim**. These were a sort of household gods, and some charm or virtue seems to have been ascribed to the possession of them. Hence Rachel stole *the teraphim* (Gen. xxxi. 19) when she was leaving her father's home. *that he might perform* (R.V. **confirm**) *the words of the law*] What Josiah desired was not only to carry out on this occasion the prescription of the Law, but so to establish the observance that it should continue and not be lightly modified. There is no mention of the passover held in the nineteenth year and in the succeeding years of Josiah's reign. It would be rash, however, to conclude from such absence of the record, that the same solemnity was not used every succeeding year of the king's reign, almost as rash as to decide that the passover had been unobserved since the time of Samuel. **25.** *no king before him*] For before the kingdom was established the religious strictness of the people had greatly degenerated, and even the best rulers never were so solemnly recalled to the legal regulations as Josiah was by the discovery of the Temple-copy of the Law.

We have now come to the last mention of the book which was found in the Temple and of its influence. From the allusions to its contents we can see that it must have contained such threatenings against neglect of the Law as are found in Deuteronomy; such injunctions for the putting down of idolatry and its attendant superstitions as we have now in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and such ordinances concerning the observance of the passover as are found in Exodus and in Numbers. Without saying therefore that the book was in the form which we now possess (for that probably underwent revision in the days of Ezra and even later), yet there was in it that which represented for that time the same code and regulations as we have now in the books of Moses, from which it is seen that the portions read by Josiah and Shaphan were substantially derived. It is to be supposed that modifications would be here and there introduced into the regulations, both for civil and religious observances, according to the changed circumstances of the people. But these would only be made by persons acting in the spirit of the great lawgiver, and endued with zeal for God's service as he was, and therefore everything thus included would continue to be called, as it continued to be in spirit, the law of Moses.

because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out 27
of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. Now the rest of the acts of 28
Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In his days Pharaoh- 29
nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his 30
servants carried him *in a chariot* dead from Megiddo, and brought him *to* Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he *began* to 31
reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the 32

27. *and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen*] R.V. **this city which I have chosen, even Jerusalem.**

29. *Pharaoh-nechoh*] R.V. **necoh.** He is stated to have been the 5th or 6th king of the Saite XXVIth dynasty. His expedition against the king of Assyria was B.C. 610. He probably came from Egypt by sea and landed on the coast of Palestine. Otherwise Josiah would have chosen some place further south than Megiddo to meet him. *and king Josiah went against him*] In Chronicles we read that Josiah 'disguised himself, that he might fight with the king of Egypt, and hearkened not unto the words of Necholi from the mouth of God.' *at Megiddo*] On this city, and its position and military importance, see notes on ix. 28.

30. *carried him* in a chariot] The italics are wrong, as also in ix. 28. The verb signifies 'to carry in a chariot.' The R.V. prints in common type. According to the Chronicler, they moved him from his war chariot into a second chariot which he had at hand. *Jehoahaz...and anointed him*] To anoint a king who succeeded in the ordinary way was not usual. It appears from the history in Kings that Eliakim (Jehoiakim) was older than Jehoahaz, because on Eliakim's succession he is stated to have been 25 years old, while Jehoahaz, whose reign was only of three months' duration, is said to have been 23 when he came to the throne (2 Kings xxiii. 31 and 36). But in the genealogy (1 Chron. iii. 15) the sons of Josiah are put down as 'the firstborn Johanan (and this the margin of A.V. identifies with Jehoahaz), the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.' If the margin of A.V. is correct then Jehoahaz would have succeeded in his proper place. But he is called Shallum in Jer. xxii. 11, and so he would be, according to the Chronicler, the fourth son.

31. *his mother's name* was *Hamutal*] So he was by the same mother as well as by the same father as Zedekiah. See xxiv. 18.

33 LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that *he* might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a
34 tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name *to* Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz *away:* and he came *to* Egypt,
35 and died there. And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give *it* unto Pharaoh-nechoh.
36 Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he *began* to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of
37 Rumah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the
24 LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim

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On *Libnah*, see above viii. 22. **33.** *put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath*] In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3 it is said 'the king of Egypt put Jehoahaz down at Jerusalem.' We cannot, however, be sure that this implies an advance by Pharaoh-necoh upon the holy city. However, the appointment which the people had made was clearly not acceptable to the Egyptian king, and Jehoahaz was carried away to the point which Pharaoh had reached in his march from Carchemish, and there put in bonds. *Riblah*] (called also *Riblathah*) was a city on the Orontes, and on the road which led from Palestine to Babylon. **34.** *Eliakim...and turned his name* to *Jehoiakim*] On the custom of changing the names of subject persons and slaves, cf. the change of Joseph's name in Egypt (Gen. xli. 45, also chap. xxiv. 17 below). *and* [R.V. **but he**] *took Jehoahaz* away] i.e. from Riblah, and carried him prisoner into Egypt, where he died. See Jer. xxii. 11, 12.

35. *he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land*] The king did not undertake to pay, as had been done aforetime (cf. xvi. 8; xviii. 15), this tax out of any treasures in the house of the Lord, or of the king's house. In those troublous days there was likely to be but little in store, so a tax was laid on the whole people.

36. *His mother's name* was *Zebudah*] R.V. **Zebidah**. The name *Rumah*, the native place of Zebidah, is not mentioned elsewhere.

XXIV. **1.** *Nebuchadnezzar...came up*] We learn from Jeremiah (xlvi. 2) that Pharaoh-necoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Euphrates near Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, who founded the Babylonian Empire. It was while Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in this expedition against the Egyptians and their allies that he was recalled to take the throne of Babylon. He had been acting as general for his father, though to the Jewish mind

became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him bands of the 2
Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the com- 3
mandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also *for* the innocent blood that he shed: for 4
he filled Jerusalem *with* innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and 5
all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his 6
fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. And the 7
king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

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he would appear as king of Babylon, especially as he so soon after became in reality king and was made known to them as such by terrible experience. *Jehoiakim became his servant three years*] i.e. He undertook to pay a certain yearly tribute to Babylon. The conqueror appears also to have carried off captives from Jerusalem, for it was at this time that Daniel and his companions were taken away (Dan. i. 1). **2.** *And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans**. The bands were irregular marauding parties which were allowed to overrun the country of the rebellious vassal before the great king could put his trained force in motion. *according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by* [R.V. **by the hand of**] *his servants the prophets*] Much more stress is laid in Kings than in Chronicles on the judgement being Jehovah's work. **3.** *for the sins of Manasseh*] See above on xxxiii. 26. The fifty-five years of Manasseh's rule sealed the nation's fate. **4.** *which* [R.V. **and**] *the Lord would not pardon*] The example, set for so long a time, had so penetrated the national character, that Jehovah, who multiplies His pardon (Is. lv. 7), could bear with the transgressions no longer. **5.** *the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim*] One of the most conspicuous acts of Jehoiakim's impiety was the burning of Jeremiah's roll of prophecies (Jer. xxxvi.), and the way in which evil-doing had made men callous is expressed in the prophet's narrative: 'Yet they were not afraid nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants.' So the prophecy of the Lord against Jehoiakim was, 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David.' **6.** *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers*] How the violent death which the prophet foretold came about the history makes no record. **7.** *the king of Egypt came not again any more*] The whole Asiatic possessions of Egypt had been conquered by the Babylonians, who now become the prominent heathen people in the Scripture story. *from the river*

8 Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he *began* to reign,
and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's
name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.
9 And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD,
10 according to all that his father had done. At that time the
servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up *against*
11 Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants *did*
12 besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the
king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his
princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in
13 the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all
the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of
the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which
Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as
14 the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and

[R.V. **brook**] *of Egypt*] This is not the Nile, but the modern *Wady El Arish*, a desert stream toward the border of Egypt.

8. *Jehoiachin* was *eighteen years old*] The Chronicler says *eight*. That 'eighteen' is the correct number may be concluded because (see verse 15) Jehoiachin had *wives*, which would hardly be the case at *eight*. *Elnathan of Jerusalem*] Almost certainly the same person who is called 'Elnathan the son of Achbor' (Jer. xxvi. 22), and who was sent by Jehoiakim with a party of men into Egypt to fetch thence Urijah the prophet, whom Jehoiakim caused to be put to death. **10.** *the servants of Nebuchadnezzar...came up* against [R.V. **to**] *Jerusalem*] On 'servants' see note on v. 13. **11.** *Nebuchadnezzar...came against* [R.V. **unto**] *the city, and his servants* did *besieye* [R.V. **were besieging**] *it*] The latter clause of the verse indicates that the siege had begun before Nebuchadnezzar came thither in person.

12. *Jehoiachin...went out to the king of Babylon*] He did as Rab-shakeh invited the people to do on a former occasion (xviii. 31) 'Come out to me.' This was to submit himself to Nebuchadnezzar. *in the eighth year of his reign*] i.e. of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. We know from Jeremiah (xxv. 1) that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. So the time just admits of the three months' reign of Jehoiachin, as his father reigned eleven years (xxiii. 36). **13.** *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord*] According to the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7) some of the vessels of the house of the Lord had been taken to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim. *and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon...had made*] We know from Ezra i. 7—11 that Cyrus gave back to the Jews after the Captivity 5400 vessels of gold and silver. We must suppose that the larger portion of these had been taken away at first. This second plundering of the Temple appears to have been conducted with much more violence than the former. Here we are probably to understand that Nebuchadnezzar stripped all that was overlaid with gold. *as the Lord*

all the princes, and all the mighty *men* of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's 15
mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he *into* captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and 16
craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's 17
brother king in his stead, and changed his name *to* Zedekiah.

Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he *began* to 18
reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the 19
LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through 20
the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah

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had said] To Hezekiah after his ostentation (xx. 17). **14.** *he carried away all Jerusalem*] The policy of Nebuchadnezzar was to remove out of the way all those who might be able to organize and plan a revolt when he and his army had departed. Hence all the people of rank, of wealth, and of skill as handicraftsmen are deported, and only the poorest folk left, who had neither knowledge nor means for doing more than work of drudgery. **17.** *Mattaniah*] He was the brother of Jehoiakim, and as we gather from 1 Chron. iii. 15, he was Josiah's third son. *Zedekiah*] Both this name and *Mattaniah* have *Jah* = Jehovah for their termination. We may therefore suppose that the choice of his new name was left to the Jewish king.

18. *Hamutal*] See xxiii. 31. **20.** *For through the anger of the Lord it came* [**did it come**] *to pass*] Still the same language as in xxiii. 27 and in xxi. 12—14, and all pointing to the evil practices of Manasseh and his times. The picture in 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 14—16, sets before us the way in which the evil doings had corrupted all classes. *that* [R.V. **and**] *Zedekiah rebelled*] There were several stages in Zedekiah's progress to complete revolt. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 12) says that Nebuchadnezzar had made the new king swear unto him by God, perhaps thinking such an oath would be more binding than if he sware by any other oath. We know (Jerem. xxix. 3) that Zedekiah sent an embassy to the king of Babylon, apparently with the desire of getting back the captives who had been taken away with Jeconiah. If this were really his wish it did not succeed, and thus the wish to revolt may have arisen. A little later Zedekiah went himself in the company of Seraiah (Jer. li. 59) to Babylon. This was in the fourth year of his reign. Amid all these communications with the conqueror, we learn (Jer. xxvii. 3) that messengers came to Jerusalem from the kings of Edom, Moab,

25 rebelled against the king of Babylon. And it came to pass in
the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth
day of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came,
he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it;
2 and they built forts against it round about. And the city was
3 besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the
ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the
4 city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And
the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night
by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the
king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round
5 about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain. And the

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Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, who all seemed anxious to form a league against Babylon. Zedekiah listened to false prophets like Hananiah (Jer. xxviii. 1—4), who told him that the yoke of the king of Babylon was to be broken and the captives all to be brought back, and along with them the vessels of the house of the Lord. Disappointed of his petitions, and encouraged by the kings round about him, and by the smooth things he heard at home, Zedekiah revolted, probably refusing to pay the yearly tribute and sending (Ezek. xvii. 15) down to Egypt to obtain help in horses and chariots. Presently afterwards the Babylonian armies came once more against Jerusalem.

XXV. **1.** *in the ninth year of his reign*] i.e. of Zedekiah's reign. How long before this, the neglect to pay the tribute, which was the usual indication of disaffection, had gone on we are not told. *and pitched* [R.V. **encamped**] *against it*] 'encamp' is the general term for a military 'pitching' of tents. *built forts*] To the precise character of these erections the word gives no clue by its derivation. **2.** *unto the eleventh year*] The natural strength of the position of Jerusalem must have been very considerable, for such a rabble as remained to be able to hold out nearly two years against the forces of Babylon. **3.** *And on the ninth* day *of the* fourth *month*] The words in italic omitted here by the scribe, can be filled up from Jer. xxxix. 2; lii. 6. *the famine prevailed*] R.V. **was sore.** **4.** *And the city was broken up*] R.V. **Then a breach was made in the city.** The old phrase 'broken up' was the same in sense as 'broken through.' We have a more full account of the events here alluded to in Jer. xxxix. 2—7. There we learn that when the breach had been made the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate, and when Zedekiah saw them he and his men of war fled.

by *the way of the gate between two* [R.V. **the two**] *walls*] This was a definite locality. From its proximity to the king's garden, this gate must be the same which is called in Neh. ii. 14; iii. 15, 'the gate of the fountain.' It was close to the pool of Siloam, and so the way through it would lead down to the Kidron valley. *which* is [R.V. **was**] *by the king's garden*] Whether the king's garden was outside or within the walls does not appear. *and* the king *went the way* [R.V. **by the way**] *toward the plain*] R.V. **of the**

army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the 6
king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgement upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put 7
out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him *to* Babylon.

And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, 8
which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant

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Arabah. See note on xiv. 25. The whole valley from the sea of Galilee southward to the desert was called by this name. **5.** *And* [R.V. **But**] *the army of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldeans**. This change in the name of the people of Babylon is made in every place through the chapter. As the troops were all round the city there was very little chance for the king to get away. In his flight he was making for the Jordan, thinking pursuit would be more difficult in the mountainous region on the east of the river. But he was overtaken in the plains of Jericho, before the river was reached.

6. *So* [R.V. **Then**] *they took the king, and brought him up to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Babylon*] Nebuchadnezzar was stationed at some distance, and was awaiting the issue of the campaign.

and they gave judgement upon him] Jer. xxxix. 5 says, '*He* gave judgement upon him.' The king appointed a committee to try Zedekiah, and when they had given their sentence, Nebuchadnezzar commanded it to be carried into effect. **7.** *slew the sons of Zedekiah*] This was done to prevent the rise of a new revolt under a successor. *put out the eyes of Zedekiah*] This punishment the Philistines inflicted on Samson (Jud. xvi. 21) before they put him in the prison-house. It is very striking to put side by side the two prophecies concerning Zedekiah, uttered the one by Jeremiah, the other by Ezekiel. The former said (xxxiv. 2), 'Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon' (cf. Jer. xxxii. 4); the latter (xii. 13) says of this king, 'I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldæans, yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.' *and bound him with fetters of brass*] R.V. **in fetters**. There is no need to express the metal of which the fetters were made. *and carried him to Babylon*] The narrative in Jeremiah adds, 'and put him in prison till the day of his death.'

8. *on the seventh* day] Jeremiah says *the tenth day*. *Nebuzar-adan, captain* [R.V. **the captain**] *of the guard*] The title 'captain of the guard,' literally 'chief of the slaughterers,' is found in Gen. xxxvii. 36, and frequently afterwards in that book. Probably this officer was at first the executioner, and the name was retained after the duties had been delegated. This officer, Nebuzar-adan, was sent by Nebuchadnezzar to take charge of all that was done after Jerusalem had been actually taken. His behaviour to Jeremiah was of the most generous character, and

9 of the king of Babylon, *unto* Jerusalem: and he burnt the
house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of
Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire.
10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain
of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the
fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the
remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the
12 guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of the
13 poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. And
the pillars of brass that *were in* the house of the LORD, and the
bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD,
did the Chaldees break *in pieces*, and carried the brass of them
14 to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers,
and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they
15 ministered, took they *away*. And the firepans, and the bowls,
and such *things* as *were of* gold, *in* gold, and *of* silver, *in* silver,
16 the captain of the guard took *away*. The two pillars, one sea,
and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the
17 LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. The
height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapiter
upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapiter three cubits;

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appears to have been guided by the directions of the king of Babylon. **9.** *every great* man's *house burnt he with fire*] R.V. omits 'man's.' **11.** *and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon*] R.V. **and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon.** *with the remnant* [R.V. **residue**] *of the multitude*] Also R.V. adds **captive** after 'carry away' at the close of the verse. Nebuzar-adan took the residue of the better sort, both those who still were faithful to their country and those who had gone over to the Babylonian side, and the residue of the common folks, who were likely to prove useful in some settlement or other, and carried both these classes with him.

12. *left of the poor* [R.V. **poorest**] *of the land*] Now that the great houses and their inhabitants were gone and the craftsmen also, the life became no better than that of the nomads, and the people left behind could only turn to keeping the land in cultivation. **13.** *and the pillars of brass*] These were the pillars, Jachin and Boaz, the two masterpieces of Hiram mentioned in 1 Kings vii. 15. *and the bases*] See 1 Kings vii. 27. *and the brasen sea that* was [R.V. **were**] *in the house of the Lord*] On the brasen sea, see 1 Kings vii. 23. **15.** *and the bowls*] R.V. **basons.** All these vessels are enumerated among the things provided for the Temple services in the account of Solomon's Temple referred to above. and *such* things *as* were of *gold*, in *gold*, *and* of *silver*, in *silver*] R.V. **that which was of gold, in gold, and that which was of silver, in silver.** **16.** *the brass...was without weight*] This is said before in the account of their casting, 1 Kings vii. 47. **17.** *and the chapiter upon it*

and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiter round about, all *of* brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work. And the captain of the guard took 18
Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: and out of the city he took an 19
officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city: and Nebuzar-adan captain of the 20
guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah: and the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them 21
at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, 22
whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan,

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was *brass*] R.V. **and a chapiter of brass was upon it**. The sentence is not meant to state of what material the chapiter was, but that it was there on the top of the pillar. *wreathen work*] R.V. **network**. Twice over the change is needed in this verse.

18. *Seraiah, the chief priest*] Probably the son of Azariah and grandson of Hilkiah (1 Chron. vi. 14). *Zephaniah the second priest*] This was the son of Maaseiah (Jer. xxi. 1). He was the successor in office of Jehoiada (Jer. xxix. 25, 26). *the three keepers of the door*] These were the three Levites stationed one at each chief entrance to the Temple. **19.** *five men of them that were in the king's presence*] R.V. **that saw the king's face**. For the expression, cf. Esther i. 14. The officer over the men of war, and the five persons admitted to closest intimacy with the king, together with the scribe, represented the remaining conspicuous persons in the city: Seraiah and the others were prominent among the servants of the Temple. *principal scribe of the host*] R.V. **the scribe, the captain of the host**. This was the chief military secretary, Secretary at War. *threescore men of the people of the land*] These, though undefined, had made themselves obnoxious in some way or other. **21.** *and slew them* [R.V. **put them to death**] *at Riblah. So Judah was carried away out of their* [R.V. **his**] *land*] The A.V. has 'his own' in Jer. lii. Jeremiah gives the totals of this captivity thus. In the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar 3023, in the eighteenth year 832, and in the three-and-twentieth year 745, making a total of 4600. Jer. lii. 28—30.

22. *And* as for *the people that remained*] R.V. **were left**. The change is in accordance with A.V. in verse 11 above. *made Gedaliah...ruler*] R.V. **governor**. This man was of a conspicuous family, and is described by Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 1—3) as a man gentle and just. His father Ahikam had influence enough in the evil days of Jehoiakim to be able to protect and save the life of

23 ruler. And when all the captains of the armies, they and
their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah
governor, there came to Gedaliah *to* Mizpah, even Ishmael the
son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and
Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaaza-
24 niah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. And
Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto

Jeremiah (Jer. xxvi. 24). His grandfather Shaphan was one of the great personages in the court of Josiah. **23.** *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when all the captains...heard*] The governorship of Gedaliah appears to have found much favour. We are told (Jer. xli.) that when Jeremiah was set at liberty by Nebuzar-adan at Ramah he at once made his way to Gedaliah; moreover the captains of the forces gathered to him, and so did the Jews that had escaped into the countries round about, Moab, Ammon and Edom. Meantime Gedaliah was warned that Baalis the king of the Ammonites had sent Ishmael to slay him, but he refused to credit the report, and when one of his friends volunteered to slay Ishmael, Gedaliah would not permit it. *captains of the armies*] R.V. **forces**. Thus translated in Jer. xl. 7. to *Mizpah*] See on 1 Kings xv. 22. Jerusalem was now in ruins. Mizpah was a strong place about six miles north of the Holy City. *Ishmael the son of Nethaniah*] Jeremiah xli. 1 (see also below verse 25) adds that Nethaniah was the son of Elishama of the seed royal. How he was connected with the royal blood we cannot discover. He had been in the country of the Ammonites during the destruction of Jerusalem, and when Gedaliah was set up as governor in Mizpah he came into Judah, apparently at the instigation of Baalis, king of Ammon, with the purpose of slaying Gedaliah and occupying his place. At first he acted as if friendly to Gedaliah, but after a short time, at a banquet where he and ten friends were entertained by Gedaliah, the murder of the governor was perpetrated, and at the same time all the Jews in the house with Gedaliah were slain. All this was done with such precaution that for two days nobody outside the governor's palace knew what had been done. After that time Ishmael, observing a party of fourscore pilgrims coming towards Mizpah, went to meet them, and bringing them into the courtyard of the house as if to see Gedaliah, had all but ten of them killed and cast into the well in the court. He now resolved on flight, and taking away with him the daughters of Zedekiah, who had been put under Gedaliah's charge, he turned his steps to the land of Ammon. But Johanan and the other captains, who had by this time discovered the atrocious murders, pursued Ishmael, yet though they came up with him and his party, the villain, and eight more with him, escaped into the country of the Ammonites.

Johanan the son of Careah] R.V. **Kareah**. It was Johanan who warned Gedaliah of the plot against him. *Jaazaniah the son of a* [R.V. **the**] *Maachathite*] The name is spelt *Jezaniah* in Jeremiah's narrative. **24.** *Gedaliah sware to them*] He

them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you. But it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* 25 Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. And all the people, both small and great, and the 26 captains of the armies, arose, and came *to* Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the 27 captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he *began* to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the 28 throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; and 29 changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually

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gave them a most solemn promise that they should enjoy the security which he expected under the rule of the Chaldæans.

Fear not to be [R.V. **because of**] *the servants of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans**. The alarm of the returning fugitives would be lest another Chaldæan force should come and do to Mizpah as they had done to Jerusalem. **25.** *in the seventh month*] Jerusalem was overthrown in the fifth month (see above verse 8), so that but two months had elapsed, and Gedaliah's influence had begun, even in that brief period, to inspire much confidence.

26. *all the people...and the captains of the armies* [R.V. **forces** *arose and came* to *Egypt*] Feeling now sure that there would be reason to fear because of the servants of the Chaldæans.

27. *the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin* Thus twenty-six years had elapsed since Jerusalem was overthrown. *on the seven and twentieth* day *of the month*] That the year, month and day are so carefully noted shews that the captive Jews regarded the act of Evil-merodach as a gleam of hope for all the nation. *Evil-merodach king of Babylon*] He was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. Coming to the throne B.C. 561, he ruled for two years till B.C. 559, and then was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who thus made himself king of Babylon. *did lift up the head of Jehoiachin*] For the expression, compare Gen. xl. 13, 20. **28.** *and set his throne above the throne*, &c.] That other kings were in the same condition as Jehoiachin, and had been brought to Babylon because they were troublesome in their own countries, we can see from this verse. Some however were imprisoned, as Jehoiachin had been, while others were at liberty but confined to Babylon and the court.

29. *And changed* [R.V. **he changed**] *his prison garments*] The subject is Jehoiachin, not Evil-merodach. So R.V. omits 'he' in the next clause. *did eat bread continually before him*] R.V. **before him continually**. i.e. He himself was a constant guest

30 before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

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at the royal table. **30.** *And his* [R.V. **for his**] *allowance*] i.e. He was assigned a regular amount in money or in kind for the keeping of his attendants. *a daily rate for every day*] R.V. **every day a portion.** (See Jer. lii. 34.)

DATE DUE

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